

DISENGAGEMENT, DERADICALIZATION, AND COUNTER-RADICALIZATION:
AN EXAMINATION OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS EXTREMISM

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Abstract

Though the study of deradicalization is relatively new, in the last several decades many countries have undertaken the task of building programs within the space to address the growing threat of extremism and radicalization – both from a religious and political perspective. However, there is considerable disagreement on whether such programs are effective measures to deal with the problem, and if they are what key components should such a program contain. This paper consists of three chapters that each examine two countries each – the first covers Norway and Sweden, the second covers Morocco and Saudi Arabia, and the third addresses the United Kingdom and the United States. Within the chapters, this paper looks at what precipitated each country’s development of deradicalization, disengagement, and counter-radicalization programs; and what success and failures can be identified within the programs.

The paper uses government sources, news reports, and academic literature to evaluate each aspect of the program. Where necessary, open-source translations were used to interpret data presented in governmental reports. Government-reported statistics are used when available, while also noting if there is controversy surrounding the accuracy of those numbers.

Through this examination, all six programs were revealed to have similarities both in successes and failures, with the leading problem in this field being sufficient data to draw conclusions. In many cases, there was simply not enough data or the program had not been running long enough to make a determination about its overarching success or failures. However, generally, well-funded programs that took a holistic approach to examining individual’s problems and deradicalization had the highest rates of success. There is considerable work needed still in this field to address even basic questions, but in some cases the answers will only come with the passage of time, as an individual’s disengagement and deradicalization can only be affirmed if they continue to remain apart from their group as the years progress.

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Introduction

Although terrorism is not a problem that has developed in the last several decades, the attention it has received worldwide since 2001 has clearly grown. As part of this new global awareness, considerations of the kind of people that join extremist groups, what motivates them, and what can be done to convince them to turn their backs on these ideologies has also become more prevalent. The field of study into radicalization and its sisters deradicalization, counter-radicalization, and disengagement attempts to answer these questions that give policymakers a blueprint for how best to address these issues within their communities, as there is no one blanket solution. While there are some key components that successful programs contain, each population group and extremist identity has its own quirks and needs. A young uneducated population that is being drawn into Islamic extremist may need a different approach than an older, more educated population that is participating in violent neo-Nazi extremist groups.

In the mid-1990s, the first set of deradicalization and disengagement programs sprang up in Northern and Western Europe – with varying success and longevity – spurred on by intensive, groundbreaking research by professionals like Tore Bjørgo into resurgent white supremacy and neo-Nazism that was increasingly becoming violent. Countries used his findings on what drove individuals to become part of these groups, particularly what needs were met within the group that were not being met in their normal, everyday lives, to create – often from the ground up – programs that attempted to demonstrate that belonging to an extremist group was not the only way that could be achieved. These programs incorporated additional social services resources to assist in the deradicalization and disengagement process so that individuals had a network of support when they were comfortable with leaving and would not be driven back into the arms of the extremist group at the first problem. Some of these programs are still in existence, and with the rising issue of white supremacy and far-right terrorism, what these programs found to be keys to their success has become increasingly relevant.

Similarly, the attacks on Western countries by Islamic extremists in the early 2000s spurred a recalculation on how individuals who are involved with these groups can affect not only their native countries, but the global community. Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa also began to create

programs addressing the radicalization of elements within their own countries. Likely hastened in part by pressure from Western powers, but also as a response to terrorist acts within their own countries and a growing threat of non-state actors recruiting their citizens to participate in transnational terrorism, these countries began to create deradicalization programs of their own. These programs often took significantly different paths than similar programs in Western countries – perhaps because of the sheer number of individuals they were attempting to reach but also because of the overall qualities of the countries’ populations. Additionally, these programs also devoted considerable resources and government power to counter-radicalization efforts with the idea of promoting moderate forms of Islam that could push back on extremist ideologies. With comprehensive deradicalization and counter-radicalization efforts, Middle Eastern and North African countries made some headway in addressing extremist ideologies within their populations – though there are significant questions about the reliability of the data on these programs and their success rates.

For Western nations, the threat of terrorism committed by radical Islamist groups was no longer a nebulous problem that threatened Muslim-majority countries; the increasing sophistication of these groups made them a threat, not only to commit further attacks but to recruit, train, and weaponize their own populations. No longer was simply staunching the flow of potential foreign terrorists into the country a sufficient response, as demonstrated by the 2005 bombings in London that were committed by natives of the United Kingdom.

Without a doubt, one of the positives that came from these attacks was the increase in funding for “homeland security”-type programs. It is from these – now top-priority for Western governments – organizations that led to the creation of broad Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategies. While the majority of time and resources within CVE strategies was usually devoted to guarding against a future terrorist incident, with increased funding for intelligence and police activities, oftentimes a subcomponent of the program was generally geared toward the deradicalization individuals living within the country. How those programs was structured, what they focused on, and how involved the central government was all differed considerably – as did the types of support that they offered. With these differences, the programs had varying degrees of success.

This paper will examine the deradicalization, disengagement, and counter-radicalization programs across the globe focusing on three on each of the areas outlined above. Each chapter is devoted to a pair of case studies focusing on countries that share specific geographic or extremist problem sets that can be easily compared to allow for easier extrapolation of the research and data. The chapters will each take a deeper dive into these programs, examining how they are structured; what populations they seek to address and how those targeted populations may shape the way that the program is put together; how the government's actions effect the program, both positively and negatively; and the successes and failures of each program. Overall, the paper seeks to discern what, if any, commonalities bind their successes or failures in order to aid in the development of these programs in other countries.

Current Scholarship and Where This Examination Fits

An overarching theme to the paper – that deradicalization, counter-radicalization, and disengagement programs can be an important tool in combatting extremism if they are set up correctly, have proper oversight, and are transparent in their data – fits with the general scholarship on this issue. Although there are some within the field – and many outside academia in government service – that have judged these programs to be an expensive, unsuccessful attempt to reach “criminals” who can never be redeemed, this paper lays out why this position is both incorrect and untenable. If countries simply abandon these individuals to their extremist groups or throw them in jail with no thought to how they will behave upon their release, the problem will not cease to exist. Rather, one of the best ways to address this problem is to tackle it, while being realistic in the approach that not every extremist is reachable or convincible and not all deradicalization efforts are going to work.

The findings of this paper also fall into much mainstream scholarship as to whether the programs are as successful as some of them claim to be. Because many of the statistics self-reported by individual governments and are not regularly audited by outside groups, many times there is an opaqueness on this question and success rates of 100 percent should be viewed with deep skepticism. Additionally, this paper offers a perspective that in many cases, even for countries whose programs have been in existence for years, it is often too early to judge their success. As it is impossible to prove a negative, the only way to demonstrate a program's effectiveness is for its participants to remain deradicalized and disconnected from extremist groups. While individuals may be able to do that for years after leaving a deradicalization

program, it is not unreasonable to believe that some may backslide into extremism or their former groups, much as an alcoholic or drug addict can relapse after years of sobriety.

What partially sets this paper apart from others in this field is the examination of deradicalization programs is that it uses sets of case studies to draw comparisons and common threads from disparate programs across the globe and different forms of extremism. While much of the scholarship tends to look at deradicalization in a siloed manner, such as looking at programs in the Middle East solely or looking at how Western nations approach the same issues, this paper utilizes its chapters to examine case studies of related countries while also taking a comprehensive view of the issue.

How This Paper is Structured

The first chapter examines case studies of Norway and Sweden, which were two of the first – if not the first – countries to create holistic programmatic approaches to tackling disengagement and deradicalization. Both of these programs sprang up in the mid-to late 1990s and were tasked with growing far-right extremist groups. Although the neo-Nazi groups within both countries had many of the same ideological positions, the size of the movement and the kind of individuals that participated in each program were very different and led to considerable difference in how the program in each country was constituted. Sweden also helped to pioneer the concept of programs relying on – and being run by – members of the former extremist groups that the program itself was trying to reach. The chapter outlines the opportunities and challenges that facet of the program presented and if and how they were able to adjust. The examination of programs in Sweden and Norway also looks at how the lack of a religious ideological component effected the focus and services offered by the program. Finally, the chapter looks at the data collected by each program, specifically on the number of their participants and if they remained separate from radical ideologies to determine if the programs were success and similar programs could be replicated and expect similar successes.

The second chapter looks at programs in the Muslim-majority countries of Morocco and Saudi Arabia. This pair of countries presents an interesting dichotomy into how the brand of Islam that a country supports – and many of its citizens adhere to – can become a challenge when it is necessary to commit resources to deradicalization. The chapter examines how Morocco's long-standing tradition and promotion of moderate Islam has aided in their deradicalization efforts, where as Saudi Arabia's support and proselytization of strict Wahhabism often favored by extremist groups themselves has become a significant obstacle in their

deradicalization efforts. Additionally, this chapter discusses the use of counter-radicalization in many forms and how it is an integral part of deradicalization efforts in these countries. As the deradicalization programs in both of these countries is almost completely focused on prison populations, the case studies look at any gaps that may exist which effect success rates, as well as examining the reported recidivism rates within the programs. Finally, the chapter looks at how the credibility of the self-reported statistics of the programs may affect how the program is judged.

The third and final chapter looks at the different deradicalization programs in the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as how they fit into their larger CVE strategy. The UK and the U.S. allow for an interesting comparison because of the strength of the British central government's involvement in their program as compared to the *extremely* decentralized American program, and the chapter attempts to answer whether a more centralized approach positively effects the success rates of the program. Additionally, the chapter also looks at how the demographics of the Muslim populations in each country effect the program, as the population of UK Muslims has long been considered to be more poorly integrated into the social fabric of the country than the population of U.S. Muslims. Finally, the research looks into how the influx of former foreign fighters, specifically from the Islamic State, has impacted the programs and what adjustments have been necessary – especially in the United Kingdom.

Comprehensively, this paper focuses on what the data says about the success of the programs. Where there are holes in available data, this paper delves into why knowing this data is important and how it could affect overall evaluations of the programs. The paper also attempts to break out the specific components of programs that are most successful and highlight the most problematic aspects that result in failures. Finally, as many of these programs can be considered to be in their infancy, the paper looks at what information is crucial to evaluate going forward.

Literature Review

While there is general agreement across geographic, demographic, and religious lines that terrorism is one of, if not the, most significant global issue of the twenty-first century. However, there is less agreement about what should be done to rehabilitate those that have undergone radicalization. Further, there is no agreement on what constitutes rehabilitation and the more general, is it possible to deradicalize and rehabilitate a former terrorist. Indeed, the mere concept of deradicalization is hotly debated among psychologists, religious leaders, and terrorism experts. For the purposes of this literature review, the term “terrorist” will be used to designate anyone who has undergone the radicalization process and should not be interpreted as relating to a particular group, ideology, or religion.

History of Countering Violent Extremism and Deradicalization

Deradicalization is routinely included in strategies countering violent extremism (CVE), including in countries across the Middle East and has gained prominence in recent years as scholars and policymakers have readjusted their view on the best way to prevent terrorism. Traditionally, especially among Western nations, a “kinetic approach,” usually dependent on military or other force was most commonly used deployed to fight terrorism.¹ However, terrorism that enjoys “widespread support” is particularly problematic to defeat, especially in countries that, at least partially, “achieved their independence... through violence and terrorism.”² Only after pushback from both Western leaders like British Foreign Minister David Milliband and allies in countries where the terrorism was being fought on the ground like Afghan President Hamid Karzai have more multidimensional and comprehensive strategies been deployed.³

¹ El-Said, Hamed, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK (2015).

² Kruglanski, Arie W., Michele J. Gelfand, and Rohan Gunaratna, “Aspects of Deradicalization,” *Institute for the Study of Asymmetric Conflict*. 12 January 2011, <http://www.asymmetricconflict.org/articles/aspects-of-deradicalization/>.

³ Veenkamp, Ivo and Sara Zeiger, “Countering Violent Extremism: Program and policy approaches relating to youth through education, families and communities,” in *Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, ed. M. Lombardi, et al., 151-163. Burke: IOS Press, 2015.

Indeed, while deradicalization programs are not new unto themselves, their “strategic use in counter-terrorism certainly is.”⁴ Thus, while there are some countries that have existing CVE and deradicalization programs that have been in place for years, many countries’ strategies are in their infancy.

While the attention on deradicalization programs, as well as the growth of countries that have adopted such programs are relatively new, the ideas behind them are not, as the concept of deradicalization predates the more recent terror threats. Additionally, deradicalization efforts extend far beyond Islamist terrorist to include “neo-Nazis, far-right militants, [and] narcoterrorists”⁵ and has an “established basic methodology that has been implemented for a number of years.”⁶ In fact, the first deradicalization study was released in 1988 and focused on individuals who had left and renounced their ties to Neo-Nazism in the United States; however, unlike concerted efforts to institute deradicalization programs, the individuals included in this study had “voluntarily disaffiliated themselves” from their radical groups.⁷

Concept of Deradicalization

When looking at deradicalization as a theory, some scholars are quick to separate the concept of deradicalization from the concept of disengagement because, in their view someone committed to a radical ideology can be disengaged from committing acts in the name of that ideology without being persuaded away or renouncing their beliefs. There is also an argument that deradicalization implies changing at the cognitive level with a “long-lasting change in orientation such that there is *presumably* a reduced risk of re-engaging in terrorist activity” while disengagement can mean be classified as something as small a change in roles with an organization or movement.⁸ However, in an earlier piece of work, Horgan and Braddock were definitive in their refutation that “desistance from terrorism requires a change in attitudes to precede a change in behavior.”⁹

⁴ Koehler, Daniel, “De-radicalization and Disengagement Programs as Counter-Terrorism and Prevention Tools. Insights From Field Experiences Regarding German Right-Wing Extremism and Jihadism,” in *Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Among Youth to Prevent Terrorism*, ed. M. Lombardi, et al., 120-150. Burke: IOS Press, 2015.

⁵ Stern, Jessica. “Mind over Martyr: How to Deradicalize Islamic Extremists.” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 1 (January 2010).

⁶ Veenkamp and Zeiger

⁷ Aho, James A. “OUT OF HATE: A SOCIOLOGY OF DEFECTION FROM NEO-NAZISM.” *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 11, no. 4 (1988).

⁸ Horgan, John and Kurt Braddock, “Rehabilitating the Terrorists?: Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization Programs,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22 (2010).

⁹ Horgan, John and Kurt Braddock, “Assessing the Effectiveness of Current De-Radicalization Initiatives and Identifying Implications for the Development of U.S.-Based Initiatives in Multiple Settings,” College Park: *START* (2009), https://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/publications/local_attachments/De-radicalization%20Programs%20Final%20Report.pdf.

However, disengagement can play a significant role in deradicalization. Further, Kruglanski et al. say that in many deradicalization programs, disengagement provides the *backbone* for deradicalization as these programs “stress disengagement from violence and alternative methods of redressing the alleged grievance, rather than denying the validity of the grievance.” Disengagement is also discussed in the context of behavioral deradicalization.

Deradicalization Programs

In order to examine deradicalization programs, it is necessary to understand what they are; their place in countering violent extremism (CVE) programs; and who they target. There is general agreement in the literature that deradicalization programs are not the same as counter radicalization programs and cannot be judged in the same manner. In her examination of the unaversive or deradicalization and counterterrorism, Dr. Lindsay Clutterbuck establishes that deradicalization programs target “insurgency” and “terrorism” with the aim of rehabilitating those that have been radicalized in order to reintegrate them into society.¹⁰ Unlike with counter radicalization programs that seek, mainly, to target those before they have undergone the complete radicalization process, deradicalization programs are implemented “post surrender, post detention, and post conviction.”¹¹

Within the literature focusing on deradicalization, many scholars interchangeably use the terms “disengagement” and “deradicalization,” which for the purposes of this paper do not mean the same things, and when used synonymously can lead to improper conclusions as the authors of “Disengagement from Ideologically-Based and Violent Organizations: A Systemic Review of Literature” point out.¹² Establishing that just because a subject disengages from a particular group – by whatever metrics that is judged on – does not mean that they no longer hold a particular belief system, which would lead to their reengagement. This paper is not interested in aspects of disengagement that do not also coincide with deradicalization. However, because deradicalization is a more in-depth process and cannot be judged simply by an individual removing themselves from a group, it can be much more difficult to judge effectively. In a paper

¹⁰ Clutterbuck, Lindsay, “Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism: A Perspective on the Challenges and Benefits,” Washington, D.C.: Middle East Institute, 2016. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/deradicalization-programs-and-counterterrorism-perspective-challenges-and-benefits>

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Windisch, Steve, Pete Simi, Gina Sott Ligon, and Hillary McNeel, “Disengagement from Ideologically-Based and Violent Organizations: A Systemic Review of Literature,” *Journal for Deradicalization* 9 (2017): 4.

commissioned by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, the authors point out that the challenges in this field originate with the fact that “practitioners must measure a nonevent.”¹³ Richard Barrett and Laila Bokhari point out that while the spread of radicalization and recruitment in the virtual world has led to a wider array known or suspected terrorist (KSTs), allowing for more individuals that “provide authorities with a far better understanding of the processes of radicalization,” programs to address these new groups are often in their infancy and “it is still too early to judge the long-term impact of these programmes.”¹⁴

Significance Quest Theory and the Development of Deradicalization Programs

The successful development of deradicalization programs is built on an understanding of why individuals radicalize in the first place. In the last decade a considerable percentage of scholarship on radicalization, and in turn, deradicalization, has focused on the understanding of the psychology of individuals that have been undergone the radicalization process. The “quest for significance” has been identified as a “fundamental human motivation by many psychological theorists” for decades, dating back to Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in the early 1940s.¹⁵ Dr. Arie Kruglanski has done significant work around this topic, and his assertions of the concept of a “significance quest” that propels suicidal terrorism form the basis of much of the other theoretical discussions and research in this field.¹⁶ The significance quest theory “affords an integration of seemingly disparate motivational contexts of suicidal terrorism involving personal traumas, ideological reasons, and social pressures,”¹⁷ that can help to lay the foundation for how to deradicalize an individual. For practical purposes, having a broad theoretical understanding for radicalization allows for the design of deradicalization programs that can address more factors for radicalization than programs that assume a limited cause for radicalization.

Program Standards and Ingredients for an Effective Program

¹³ Peter Romaniuk and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, “From Input to Impact: Evaluating Terrorism Prevention Programs.” The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2012. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/153962/CGCC_EvaluatingTerrorismPrevention.pdf

¹⁴ Richard Barrett and Laila Bokhari, “Deradicalization and rehabilitation programmes targeting religious terrorists and extremists in the Muslim world: An Overview,” In *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*, edited by Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. London: Routledge, 2009. 171.

¹⁵ Arie W. Kruglanski and Edward Orehek, “The Role of the Quest for Personal Significance in Motivating Terrorism,” In *The Psychology of Social Conflict and Aggression*, edited by Joseph P. Forgas, Arie W. Kruglanski, and Kipling D. Williams. New York: Psychology Press, 2011. 154.

¹⁶ Arie W. Kruglanski, Xiaoyan Chen, Mark Dechesne, Shire Fishman, and Edward Orehek, “Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers’ Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance,” *Political Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2009): 335.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 348.

Across scholarship, there is general agreement that a successful deradicalization program hinges on delegitimizing either the group or narrative – sometimes both – to which a terrorist identifies. Koehler also points out the importance of systematically dismantling “the previously learned radical ideology.”¹⁸ Further, as Koehler discusses, the “nature, scope, and structure” of deradicalization programs is largely dependent on a number of different aspects including the target, goals, and standards.¹⁹ Emilio Viano argues that prevention “should be limited and carefully focus on people who are reasonably suspected of intending to commit or directly facilitate violence, or those who are clearly targets of recruitment efforts”. For extremist groups where religion is a central part of the ideology, an effective deradicalization program must include a strong religious reeducation program. In Renee Garfinkel’s “Personal Transformations: Moving from Violence to Peace,” she studied the “dynamics of... extremists’ transformation into proponents of peace.”²⁰ In her work, Garfinkel noted that the “change from religious extremist to proponent of peace can be a spiritual transformation, much akin to religious conversion,” However, she noted that, unlike traditional religious conversions, those who go through the process as part of a deradicalization program did not have a “looming authority figure” playing an outsized role in the spiritual transformation.²¹ Additionally scholarship says that a religious component to a deradicalization program is important because religious engagement “provides an environment conducive to behavioral reform, not necessarily because it encourages ideological reform.”²²

Saudi Arabia, which conducts one of the largest deradicalization programs in the Middle East, relies heavily on its religious leaders to push the message that terrorism is anathema to the Muslim faith. Further, in one of Saudi Arabia’s most successful deradicalization facilities, Care Rehabilitation Center in Riyadh, religious reeducation, along “psychological counseling, and assistance finding a job” is critical for the reintegration of “convicted terrorists into Saudi society.”²³

¹⁸ Koehler, Daniel, “De-radicalization and Disengagement Programs as Counter-Terrorism and Prevention Tools. Insights From Field Experiences Regarding German Right-Wing Extremism and Jihadism,”

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ Garfinkel, Renee, “Personal Transformations: Moving from Violence to Peace,” United States Institute of Peace Special Report, Vol. 186, April 2007, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr186.pdf>.

²¹ *ibid*

²² Porges, Marisa L and Jessica Stern, “Getting Deradicalization Right,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2010, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/persian-gulf/2010-05-01/getting-deradicalization-right>.

²³ Stern

Determining the effectiveness of a program can be measured in a number of different ways and the literature on these accountability tools is often highly subjective. Across countries and cultures there is general agreement amongst researchers that these programs have “no established criteria of success and no standards” that apply universally.²⁴ Daniel Koehler cites the “establishment of transparent standards and legally sound guidelines regarding the data” as one of the “least effective way of maintaining the programmes’ credibility and benefits.”²⁵

There is widespread disagreement about almost every part of these programs, from who runs them to who refers the individuals targeted for deradicalization. There is some agreement that government involvement in some deradicalization programs can be viewed as a kiss of death, especially in Muslim-majority countries, where the government is often not seen as a neutral arbiter on issues of faith and radicalization. There remain questions on if this impact is replicated in Western countries, especially for programs that depend upon the government to identify individuals for participation in these programs. Are non-government entities likely to refer individuals in their communities for deradicalization to programs in which government law enforcement agencies are heavily involved? Does that make these programs automatically less effective because they are viewed skeptically by the communities that could be key to making them successful?

Additionally, there are questions about the reliance of the success and recidivism rates reported by the programs that are key to determining whether they are effective. Tom Pettinger delves into several known examples of questionable statistics, including “startlingly... low rates of recidivism” by programs in Germany, Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia.²⁶ For scholarship that is already divided on if and how to judge the effectiveness of these programs, having statistics that are unreliable simply compounds the issue.

Holes and Problems in Deradicalization Study and Research

As Noricks points out, the deradicalization process is one of the most undertheorized in all of terrorism academia, which is “particularly problematic, since deradicalization is not merely the radicalization process

²⁴ Barrett and Bokhari, 174.

²⁵ Koehler, Daniel “Are counter-radicalisation approaches an effective counterterrorist tool? Yes: An Effective Counterterrorism Tool,” In *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism*, edited by Richard Jackson, and Daniela Pisoiu. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 2018.

²⁶ Tom Pettinger. “De-radicalization and Counter-radicalization: Valuable Tools Combating Violent Extremism, or Harmful Methods of Subjugation?” *Journal for Deradicalization* 12 (Fall 2017): 11.

in reverse.” One of the significant problems that the study of deradicalization faces is that the terms necessary to describe much of the process, from “terrorism” to “violent extremism” to even “radicalization” don’t have a standard definition, and the concept of “violent extremism” is one that has only come into vogue after September 11, 2011. Clutterbuck faults this “terminological complexity” for a “blurring of the lines” between many of the key terms and says that it becomes increasingly difficult to “determine the most effective counter-measures” to combat them.²⁷

Clutterbuck also points to using the term “deradicalization” as inherently counterintuitive because it implies that programs can only be implemented after a person has been radicalized, while many of the programs in use, especially in Western countries (like PREVENT in the UK and Living Safe Together in Australia) focus a great deal of time *preventing* radicalization in their deradicalization strategies, not merely trying to fix the problem. In their study of deradicalization programs, Horgan and Braddock also found that “program collectively referred to as de-radicalization programs are... rarely focused on achieving ‘de-radicalization’ as a requisite or even desired outcomes.”²⁸ Thus, they suggested calling them “risk reduction efforts,” though clearly that term didn’t catch on.

Defining Success

Unfortunately, there is little agreement on a collective framework for “determining what constitutes effectiveness or success.”²⁹ Horgan and Braddock’s 2009 work, which examines seven countries as individual case studies, also points out that no country has attempted to “identify valid and reliable indicators of successful de-radicalization... [thus] any attempt to objectively evaluate the effectiveness any such program is beset with difficulties.”³⁰ Additionally, as many of the countries who have deradicalization programs are less than transparent with their data, scholars are forced to rely on information that cannot be independently corroborated. Ansary spelled this out further when discussing the Saudi program, and he recommended that they “create an independent commission to evaluate many of the programs... to highlight measurable progress and to determine the benchmarks the programs have set.”³¹

²⁷ Clutterbuck

²⁸ Horgan and Braddock, “Assessing the Effectiveness of Current De-Radicalization Initiatives and Identifying Implications for the Development of U.S.-Based Initiatives in Multiple Settings.”

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Ansary

Additionally, as much of the scholarship mentions, success is often measured in recidivism rates. This in and of itself presents a problem because recidivism can only be measured after a participant's release, and can often occur years, if not decades later. Additionally, as Porges and Stern point on, recidivism rates are often dependent upon intelligence services to track those who have participated. They use Saudi Arabia as an example who, until 2009, considered its program to be a complete success until "the terrorist activities of 11 graduates were discovered."³² Thus, this measure is clearly problematic.

³² Porges and Stern

Methodology

This paper uses three sets of case studies – one set per chapter (Norway and Sweden; Morocco and Saudi Arabia; and United Kingdom and the United States), to evaluate their relevant deradicalization programs using both a quantitative, specifically a correlational study, and qualitative approach. Where available, I have used government-provided data to evaluate characteristics of populations that would likely be at risk for radicalization; who is being evaluated as a candidate for deradicalization; enrolled in a deradicalization program; and the outcomes for individual participants. In some instances, government data sets were available only through reporting by media outlets; in those instances, when reported by multiple sources, I judged them as likely to be accurate and have included them. When evaluating the failures of deradicalization programs, individual examples were culled from newspapers and scholarly publications because in many cases privacy laws required government data sets to remove personally identifiable data sets.

The details of the deradicalization programs were taken from government documents, news reports, and descriptions from officials who were either involved in their creation or are involved in their day-to-day operations. In many cases, there remain details of the programs that are unknown. Where that is the case, I have detailed the lack of information. For reporting data, especially in the case of the British deradicalization program that is constantly evolving, important details were made available in early April 2019; because of the time constraints of this paper, anything released after April 15, 2019 is not included.

When necessary, open sourced translations of official documents and news reports were used to clarify and/or verify information. In these cases, translations were checked by multiple sources to ensure accuracy. In the places where necessary, English translations of this data are used throughout the paper.

Deradicalization and Disengagement: Exit Programs in Norway and Sweden and How
the Lessons Learned from Them Influence Current Deradicalization

While the rise of Islamic terrorism receives a significant portion of the attention, Northern Europe has – for decades – dealt with a rising tide of neo-Nazis, neo-fascists, and other white power movements. The threat grew to such an extent in the mid-1990s that there was an understanding by both governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that these groups and their ideologies were becoming a serious domestic threat. In countries like Norway and Sweden, these ideologies had permeated a substantial portion of the population in the early twentieth century and were not completely eradicated with the defeat of Nazi Germany after World War II. Although many of the groups professing these beliefs were forced underground in the intervening decades, the ideologies still attracted a number of devoted followers. This chapter will look at the precipitating factors that led to the disengagement and deradicalization programs in Norway in Sweden; the relationship between the programs in both countries, including significant differences between them; and the long-lasting effects of the programs in each country.

Additionally, unlike the Islamic extremism that is discussed in later chapters of this paper, these white power movements do not have a clearly defined relationship with religion. In fact, the vast majority of these groups in Northern Europe “are predominantly secular movements” removed from “Christian religious conceptions.”³³ It is important, then, to look at how disengagement and deradicalization is addressed when there is no religious component and consider how successes and failures could be impacted by secular ideologies. This chapter will examine how programs without a religious ideological concerns are put together, which aspects of the programs have demonstrated the most success, and concerns with these programs that should be mitigated in other programs.

Overall, the Exit programs in both Sweden and Norway have similar features, at least partially because they address similar ideologies. However, as Norway’s extremist population is very young, their program emphasizes parental involvement and early intervention by professionals in order to present differing life possibilities for these groups, where as Sweden’s older population requires a programmatic structure dependent on proactive engagement from those individuals seeking to disengage and deradicalize. Sweden’s program also sets itself apart by its use of – and dependence on – the work of former neo-Nazis themselves to staff the program and coach the individuals who are attempting to leave violent, far-right extremism, which lends the program credibility but also presents challenges. While each program has

³³ Tore Bjørge, “Introduction,” In *Terror From The Extreme Right*, edited by Tore Bjørge, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1995. 9.

demonstrated high success rates, more information is needed to determine whether those successes are sustained. Particularly in the case of Sweden, the country's own legal data protections inhibit the ability to determine whether the program should be considered a success. The lack of data in both cases damages the ability to distinguish the features of each program that contribute most to its success, as well as its failures.

Norway and the Birth of EXIT Programs

The strength and power of the far-right, skinhead movement reached its peak in Norway between 1995 and 1996. Although the exact number of participants is unknown, experts believe that some 100-300 Norwegians were actively involved in these groups. Clearly, as a proportion of the overall population, involvement in these groups was not overwhelming, their propensity for violence, which had been demonstrated on a host of occasions, including some described above, was a growing issue.

The problem had become pressing and the need for some action obvious. In February 1995, 78 members of far-right extremist groups were arrested in the Torshov district of Oslo at one of their hangouts called Nationalist House.³⁴ Police raided the house after the extremists began shooting at anti-racist protestors and found a large cache of weapons and extremist propaganda.³⁵ This mass arrest, which was followed by several more in 1995 and 1996, revealed a shocking truth.³⁶ The vast majority of the arrestees were young – often under the age of 13 – and their parents were completely unaware of their participation in these radical groups.

Instead of continuing to bury their heads in the sand, in 1995 these parents sought assistance from a unit of the Manglerud police department that was devoted to violence and crime prevention; further, they pooled their resources and “established parental network groups” to aid their children’s disconnection from these groups.³⁷ These networks proved to be so effective in convincing these young people to leave these groups, that according to researchers, within months almost all the children of these parents had disengaged.³⁸

There are not exact numbers, however, nor does there appear to be data on the disengagement rates for

³⁴ Prosjekt Exit: Sluttrapport [Project Exit: Final Report], Oslo: Organisasjonen Voksne for Barn, 2000, 19. https://docplayer.me/1333874-Prosjekt-exit-sluttrapport.html#show_full_text

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ Tore Bjørgo, “Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups,” Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt), no. 627, June 2002, 18. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/27380/627.pdf>

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ *ibid*

children whose parents were not involved in the parental networks nor for older participants.

However, these parental networks served as the basis for more formal programs devoted to assisting parents to extract their children from similar groups. Parents reached out to Tore Bjørgo, a noted researcher in Norway on racist violence and youth participation in radical groups on how best to improve their efforts.³⁹ Bjørgo was, at the time, one of the leading researchers into violence committed by right-wing extremist groups, as well as what draws young people into joining these groups. His theory – quite different from many other researchers – was that people don’t join extremist groups because they “hold extremist views,” rather, “they often *acquire* extremist views because they have joined the groups for other reasons.”⁴⁰

In conjunction with the Manglerud officers who had assisted in earlier efforts for disengaging the youth participants, Bjørgo began to create a more formal program in 1996. That same year, the government convened a group of experts focused on right-wing extremism – the Interdisciplinary Advisory Service for Local Action against Racism and Xenophobia, which included some of the most respected experts in the area.⁴¹ Among the participants was Randi Talseth, the Secretary General for Adults for Children; Tore Bjørgo, who at the time was a researcher at the Norwegian Institute of international affairs; Magnus Betten, Bjørn Øvrum, and Petter Bærum from the Manglerud Police; Beate Kaupang from the Vestfold County Council; Terje Bang from the Church City Mission in Tønsberg; Nina Solberg from Sirvente, a professional services company; and Else Berg Løland, the Regional Director for Adults for Children in Kristiansand.⁴²

The group was specifically designed to assist local municipalities in addressing their right-wing extremism problem when it arose, allowing for the proliferation of best practices that could be used across the country as needed. Because it was created with an eye toward a local problem, the program formulated by Bjørgo and the Manglerud police became one of the group’s key components.

Additionally, the Norwegian government was finally able to take a more proactive approach to addressing

³⁹ *ibid*, 19.

⁴⁰ Tina Wilchen Christensen, “How extremist experiences become valuable knowledge in EXIT programmes,” *Journal for Deradicalization* 3, (Summer 2015): 103.

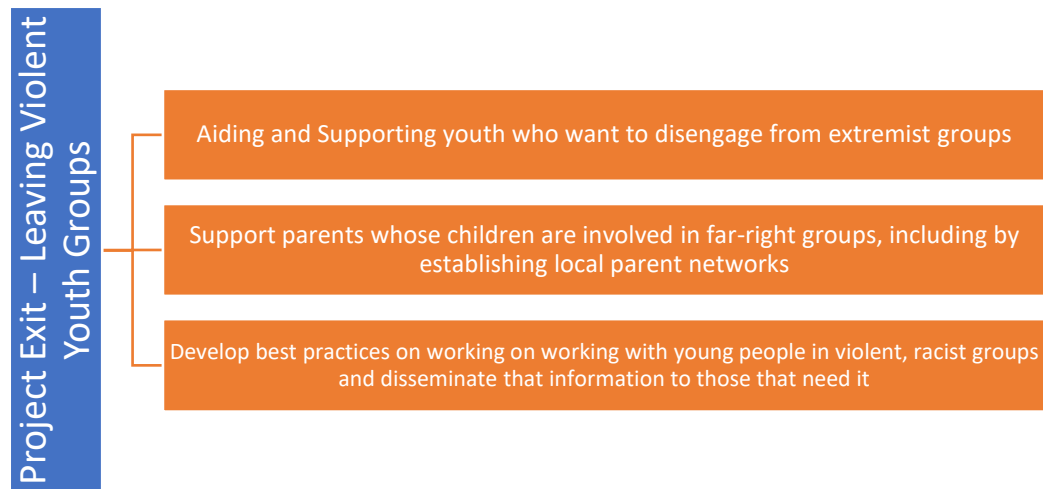
⁴¹ Froukje Demant, Marieke Sloodman, Frank Buijs, and Jean Tillie, *Teruggang en uittreding: processen van deradicalisering ontleed* [*Decline and Disengagement: An Analysis of Processes of Deradicalisation*], Amsterdam: IMES (2008), 158.

https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/1079141/64714_Demant_Sloodman_2008_Decline_and_Disengagement.pdf

⁴² *Prosjekt Exit: Sluttrapport*, 20.

the problem of right-wing radicalism and participation in extremist skinhead groups. In 1997, the program was granted three-years of funding by the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Children, and the Directorate of Immigration and was hosted by the Adults for Children NGO. The program was christened Project Exit – Leaving Violent Youth Groups and had three main objectives, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

PROJECT EXIT AND ITS OBJECTIVES (FIGURE 1)⁴³



SOURCE: TORE BJØRGO, “EXIT NEO-NAZISM: REDUCING RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTING DISENGAGEMENT FROM RACIST GROUPS.”

In keeping with the mission of the Interdisciplinary Advisory Service for Local Action against Racism and Xenophobia, Project Exit focused on working at the local level – empowering officials with best practices, rather than building an entirely different system by which to address the youth involvement. A considerable part of the program was devoted to training those that would regularly come into contact with individuals that were actively involved in the far-right groups, as well as those that were at risk of falling into those groups. According to Project Exit data, the program trained some 700 professionals, including “teachers, local youth workers, police agents,”⁴⁴ to carry out the mission of Project Exit.

As previously described, when Norway decided to tackle its neo-Nazi program in the mid-1990s, the vast majority of participants in these groups were very young and in many ways exhibit the same characteristics of youth across the world that are at risk of becoming involved with violent ideologies. Members of the far-right groups were often poorly educated, having “only achieved basic vocational training” and are, in some

⁴³ Bjørgo, “Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups,” 19.

⁴⁴ Demant, Slootman, Buijs, and Tillie, 158.

way, experiencing “social and societal problems.”⁴⁵ The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST), who are involved with monitoring and identifying members and groups within this ecosphere, also state that members “lack a social safety net” and have sometimes had “violent confrontation with a group of young immigrants” that causes them to seek solace in groups espousing ideologies against these groups.⁴⁶

According to Adults for Children, youth were often initially drawn to these extremist groups not for their ideologies but for the groups themselves. They are looking for a place to belong with individuals of a similar age that have shared experiences, and neo-Nazi groups give them all of that. When helping youth to deradicalize and disengage, it is important to remember that the ideology is often a secondary factor in these groups. While some are drawn to the violence because they are true believers in the white supremacist thought, most are not. Therefore, Project Exit had to be developed in such a way to address the primary reasons that individuals joined these groups, not simply focused on combatting the ideology.

Parental Networks as an Integral part to Project Exit

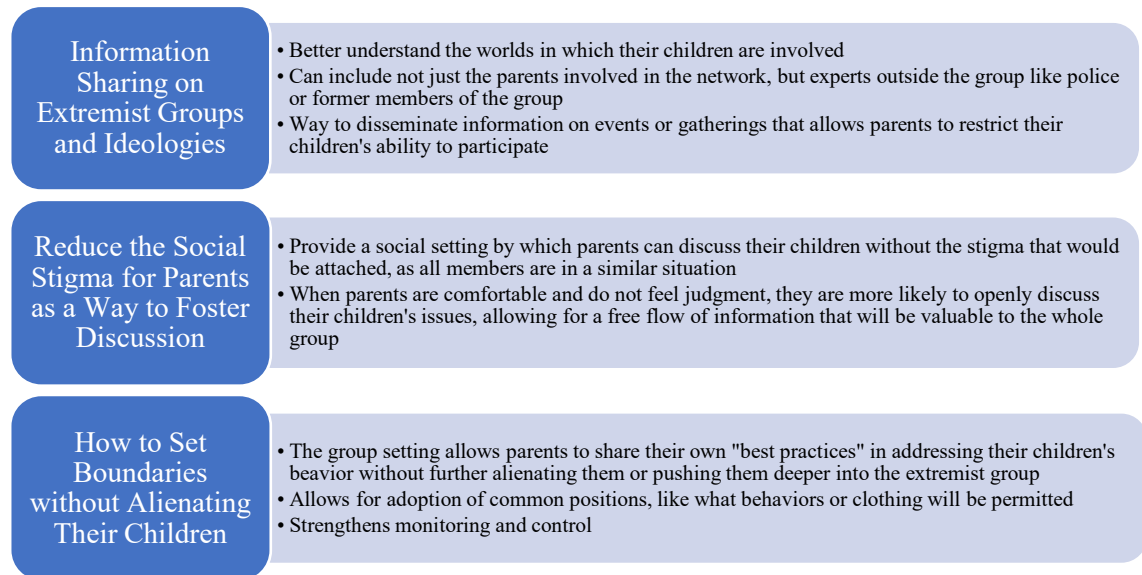
As Project Exit grew out of parental networks that were devoted to helping their children leave neo-Nazi groups, these networks remained an integral component to Exit. According to Bjørge, parents are “in a central position to influence... their children’s behavior,” and parents of teenagers can often benefit from networks of other parents in similar situations.⁴⁷ Parents, and subsequently their children who are involved in extremist activity, have been shown to benefit from participation in a parental network as described in Figure 2. Perhaps for than anything, these parental networks provide a bonding and information sharing space, where parents are not saddled with the embarrassment and shame that often comes with a child participating in extremist behavior. Rather, these spaces allow parents to develop connections with others in similar circumstances and to learn from their shared experiences. The parental networks also provide a conduit for outside experts to receive and share information that can be utilized immediately, as there are no bureaucratic layers to wade through.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*, 160.

⁴⁷ Bjørge, “Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups,” 19.

BENEFITS OF PARENTAL NETWORKS (FIGURE 2)⁴⁸



SOURCE: TORE BJØRGO, "EXIT NEO-NAZISM: REDUCING RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTING DISENGAGEMENT FROM RACIST GROUPS."

However, there is a recognition that these parental networks are not sufficient in all cases. For example, some parents hold viewpoints similar to the extremist groups that their children are involved, while others are "afraid of being branded as bad parents" or are happy that their children have friends when they haven't in the past and still others refuse to participate in talking about their familial issues in a group setting.⁴⁹ In the cases where parental networks are not applicable, other aspects of the Exit program can be utilized; therefore, a young person is not left to the clutches of the group if parental support is not available.

While there are some limitations to the parental networks, the data indicates that they are largely successful in disengaging young people from neo-Nazi groups. The parent-driven portion of Exit had a success rate of almost 90 percent⁵⁰ when the project drew to a close – the result of the government deeming the problem of right-wing radicalism solved. Specifically, according to Bjørgo, around 130 parents participated in parental networks between 1995 and 2000, with 100 children amongst them; and by the end of the five-year period, only 10 of those 100 children remained as a part of a neo-Nazi group.⁵¹ However, there is not even data to prove that the parental networks were the deciding factor in youth leaving extremist groups – or even a

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 19-20.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 21.

⁵⁰ Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Ellie B. Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," International Peace Institute, 2008, 5. <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/beter.pdf>

⁵¹ Bjørgo, "Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups," 21.

factor at all, though Bjørge says that the parental networks made a “decisive impact in many cases.”⁵²

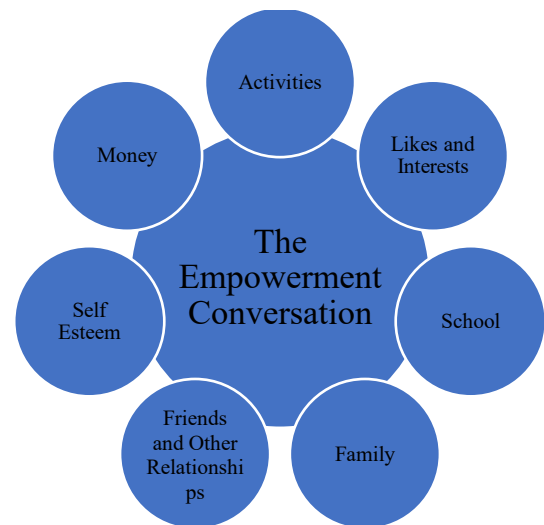
Empowerment Conversations: Addressing Current Circumstances By Revisiting Needs and Wants

While parental networks are key to Exit, they are not the sole component. Exit also incorporates what it refers to as “conversations” or “preventative talks” as a key element to the program. While the parental network portion of Exit – as well as participation in the overarching program – is not compulsory, if a person under the age of 18 is identified as being involved

in criminal activity, participating in violent extremist organizations, or at risk of joining criminal organizations, these individuals and their parents are required to speak with the police if contacted. What is most notable about these conversations is that although the specific criminal act – in this case belonging to the right-wing extremist group – is the basis for the conversation, it is not the focus.⁵³ Instead, using a “conversational tactic called ‘The Empowerment Conversation’ which focuses on understanding the individuals’ goals and sense of self, and promoting a positive view of self,”⁵⁴ police begin a conversation meant to understand and persuade, not necessarily enact punishment.

Pioneered by Bjørn Øvrum, a preventative police officer, the Empowerment Conversation is best understood as a type of behavioral therapy that seeks to show a young offender that the path they are on could have significant negative consequences for whatever they hope to accomplish in the future, as well as to help that offender better understand how their current behavior can be explained.⁵⁵ One of the most important portions of the Empowerment Conversation involves examining the behaviors and/or needs that

**THE EMPOWERMENT CONVERSATION
(FIGURE 3)**



SOURCE: TORE BJØRGE, AND YNGVE CARLSSON “EARLY INTERVENTION WITH VIOLENT AND RACIST YOUTH GROUPS.”

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ “Practical Guide to the Deradicalization of Youngsters,” FORUM, Institute for Multicultural Development, 31. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/?action=media_download&uuid=29B8D699-CC10-B759-0CFD0E7FD2D77078

⁵⁴ Vidhya Ramalingam and Henry Tuck, “The Need to Exit Programmes: Why Deradicalization and Disengagement Matters in the UK’s Approach to Far-Right Violence,” Institute for Strategic Dialogue, September 2014, 8. https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/363/134/682/

⁵⁵ Tore Bjørge and Yngve Carlsson, “Early Intervention with Violent and Racist Youth Groups,” Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt), no. 677, 2005, 95-96. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/27305/677.pdf>.

led that young person to join the extremist group and examining possible alternatives that could meet them outside of the group. The areas discussed as part of the Empowerment Conversation can be seen in Figure 3. As many of these young people are looking for a sense of belonging and friendships, part of the discussion could revolve around which legal and socially acceptable activities or groups could become an alternative. Ultimately, the point is to “look forward... to stimulate the reorientation and alteration of behaviour.”⁵⁶

Although originally designed for the police to conduct these conversations, the success of these conversations led to an expansion of the program. Teachers, counselors, social workers, and other professionals were trained in how to optimize these conversations, which allowed a larger number of at-risk youth who were involved in far-right activity to receive interventions. Additionally, with a parent’s consent, information on the young adult and the specifics of their case would be shared with other agencies “to help the child through coordinated efforts.”⁵⁷ This permission is required because – unlike in the U.S. where information can often be shared between agencies and interagency cooperation is encouraged – there are “strict rules of confidentiality practiced by social agencies.”⁵⁸

Although there are not comprehensive statistics for the entire country’s use of Empowerment Conversations, there is one example that demonstrates how effective the program can be. The Norwegian city of Kristiansand, located on the southern coast with a population around 75,000, became a breeding ground in the mid-1990s for groups of teenaged boys with extreme far-right views.⁵⁹ Several different programs, including those developed within Project Exit were dispatched to the city to deal with the growing problem. Beginning in 1996, a task force comprised of police, teachers, social workers, and youth officials utilized the Empowerment Conversation tactic to attempt to deradicalize and disengagement a group of 38 young people who were actively involved in the far-right extremist movement.⁶⁰ Within five years, twenty-nine of those participants were living what is described as “relatively normal lives,” three of the participants were dead from accidents or drug-related overdoses, and only six remained actively participating in neo-Nazi groups.⁶¹ The group of participants had expanded by the end of 2001 to include

⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ Demant, Slootman, Buijs, and Tillie, 161

⁶⁰ Bjørge and Carlsson, 96.

⁶¹ *ibid*

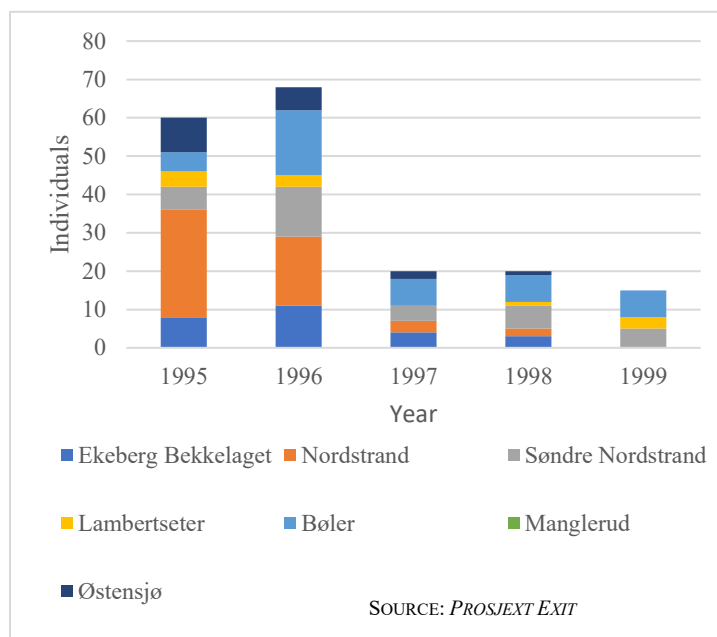
60 different young people, with 49 of them having disengaged and deradicalized – a success rate of 82%. Like the parental networks, it is difficult to draw certain conclusions that participation in Empowerment Conversations were the main reason that individuals chose to deradicalize and disengage, it seems likely that it had an effect.

Effectiveness of the Project Exit in Norway and What It Means for Current Right-Wing Extremism

The Norwegian government considers Project Exit to be a success, and there is clearly evidence that the

POLICE CONTACTS WITH FAR-RIGHT INDIVIDUALS

(FIGURE 4)



program – as well as its component parts – to support that narrative. As described previously, there was some demonstrable success stories; seemingly, if individuals participated in part of the program, they left far-right extremist groups in high rates. Additionally, as Figure 4⁶² demonstrates, the number of individuals that the police had contact with who were judged to be members to be members of these groups dropped precipitously after Project

Exit began. In 1996, 68 people from the selected seven areas were identified and by 1999, that number had dropped to 15 – a 78% decrease.⁶³

Norway’s exit program focused on young adults, making early intervention the top priority. Bjørge credits this early intervention as “one of the main reasons why the neo-Nazi scene in Norway [remained] relatively small, young, and characterised by short careers and few veterans”⁶⁴ in 2002. However, even then, there was a recognition that the program had far less success when the targeted participants were older. That may

⁶² *Prosjekt Exit: Sluttrapport*, 35.

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ Bjørge, “Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups,” 22-23.

be one of the reasons that “right-wing extremism is no longer a typical youth problem anymore,” but instead these groups “are now almost exclusively constituted by adults.”⁶⁵

Indeed, Norway’s most shocking and heinous right-wing violence in the last decade came from 32-year-old Anders Behring Breivik who killed 77 people by setting off a car bomb and conducting a shooting massacre at the annual youth summer camp of the governing Labor Party.⁶⁶ Breivik had all of the characteristics that Project Exit sought to identify and address, yet he was well past the targeted age for a parental intervention or an Empowerment Conversation. His act also came seemingly “out of the blue” in Norway, which had seen “very limited militant right-wing extremist activity or violence” since 2002.⁶⁷ However, could his behavior have been an indication of growing right-wing extremism in Norway?

While, there are indications that there right-wing thinking is making a comeback through anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, and white power groups and political parties, initial evidence points to these groups being all hat and no cattle. While groups like the *Stop Islamisation of Norway (SIAN)* and *Pegda Norway* have active online presences, even large groups can “only muster a few dozens for public demonstration” because of a fear of both counter-protestors and being identified and stigmatized as being a part of the group.⁶⁸ Additionally, in interviews with leaders of current far-right groups, Tore Bjørgo and Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik found that today’s groups are “far more restrained” in justifying violence today than similar groups were in the 1990s.⁶⁹ However, Bjørgo and Gjelsvik also point out that there are holes in this recent work – including a lack of interviews with participants in the most violent neo-Nazi groups, which could change some of the conclusions they draw. Going forward, it will be important to watch these groups to determine if their propensity for violence increases. If it does, researchers and practitioners may need to revisit Project Exit for use with an older population.

Sweden Tackles Disengagement and Deradicalization

If Norway’s problem with neo-Nazi and extremist far-right groups were relatively small and often

⁶⁵ Tore Bjørgo, “Right-Wing Extremism in Norway: Changes and Challenges,” UiO: C-REX – Center for Research on Extremism, 25 Feb 2019, <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/right-wing-extremism-in-norway.html>

⁶⁶ Sindre Bangstad, “Don’t Look Now: Can Norway reckon with the reality of right-wing extremists?” *World Policy Journal*, 35 no. 2 (Summer 2018), 34.

⁶⁷ Tore Bjørgo and Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, *Right-Wing Extremists and anti-Islam Activists in Norway: Constraints against Violence*, Norwegian Police University College and Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), Oslo: University of Oslo (2017), 2.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 6.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, 15-16.

concentrated in disorganized groups of teenaged boys, Sweden's problem was far larger and more organized. Sweden had a long history with organized Nazi movements dating back to 1924, and although the ideology suffered in the wake of the German defeat in World War II, it rebounded in 1956 with the founding of *Nordiska rikspartiet* (NRP), which became "the institution that collected, developed and restructured the ideas, experiences and aims of the pre-war and wartime Nazi movements to create the contemporary Nazi movements, in the form of subcultural groups and parties."⁷⁰ In the intervening years, the Nazi movement and took two separate paths – one part of the group focused on addressing immigration and developed the *Bevara Sverige Svenskt* (Keep Sweden Swedish) group that was adopted a "cultural racist view," the other "remained faithful to the Nazi ideology."⁷¹

By the 1980s and 1990s, the neo-Nazi groups in Sweden were increasingly militant and violent in their ideologies and had committed a number of high-profile violent crimes. Where Norway's neo-Nazi movement was often considered to have only about 100-150 active members – possibly as many as 300 in its heyday – Sweden had close to 3,000.⁷²

With supporters well into the thousands, a larger concern was the group of hangers-on and sympathizers that the neo-Nazi groups were able to attract within the country, expanding the number those with neo-Nazi extremist ties by thousands. In fact, the groups attracted enough followers that researchers and observers classified them as part of a "movement" rather than a more nebulous ideology. The strength of the movement also means that it is "sufficiently strong and intimidating to provide some protection against outside enemies," including the authorities.⁷³ In their examination of why young people join and leave racist groups, Tore Bjørgo and Yngve Carlsson additionally point to the "big and profitable 'home market'" that allows for the groups to attract individuals with a wide variety of skills, which in turn creates an "elaborate organizational, economical and media infrastructure" that is "socially attractive" for young people.⁷⁴ The attractiveness of the movement is also a clear differentiator as compared to the neo-Nazi scene in Norway, where social and familial shame and embarrassment around participation in far-right extremist ideologies was possibly one of the factors that kept their movement small and relatively limited

⁷⁰ Christer Mattsson and Thomas Johansson, "Becoming, belonging and leaving – Exit processes among young neo-Nazis in Sweden," *Journal for Deradicalization* 16, (Fall 2018), 36.

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² Bjørgo, "Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups," 5.

⁷³ Bjørgo and Carlsson, 13.

⁷⁴ Bjørgo and Carlsson, 12.

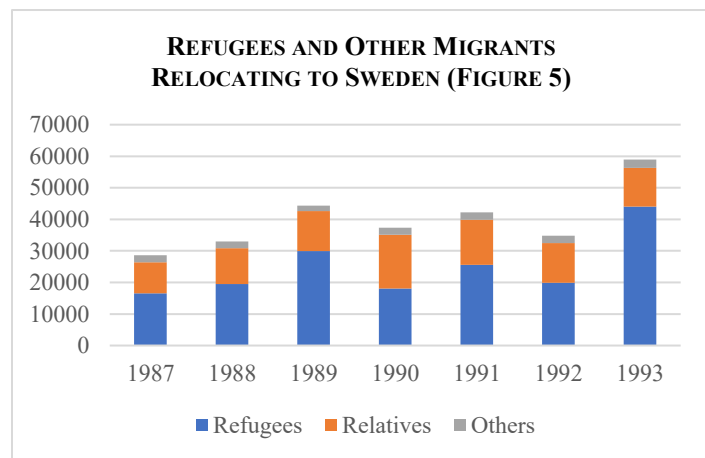
to youthful participants.

In Sweden, the attractiveness of the movement combined with the economic opportunities within the movement attracted better educated and less socially isolated individuals. This was not a movement of mal-adjusted, social misfits, rather, Sweden's scene featured skilled participants like "computer specialists, academics, [and] university students."⁷⁵ Consequently, there was room for growth within the movement, as well as the ability for younger participants to age within the movement. A significant portion of Sweden's extreme right-wing movement are in "their twenties or thirties and have already been involved in the movement for ten years or more."⁷⁶ The age of participants – and the extended time they have been involved in the movement – presents a number of challenges for authorities looking to quash neo-Nazi organizations. Because there are many veterans of the group, authorities have a difficult time creating a leadership vacuum, with the idea that this would ultimately lead to the groups dissolving. Instead, when leaders are put into prison, "there are plenty of alternative leaders to take over."⁷⁷

Growth of Immigrants, Neo-Nazi Groups, and Racist Attacks

While there are a number of reasons that violent, neo-Nazi ideology seemed to grow during this period, there is a clearly a correlation between the increasing number of migrants and refugees admitted into the country and the growth and strengthening of these

groups. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the nur



SOURCE: HELÉNE LÖÖW, "RACIST VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR IN SWEDEN: MYTHS AND REALITY."

As the number of immigrants grew, so did the number of serious, violent attacks on the population. In 1993, there were 787 police cases "where circumstances indicated that the motive behind the crime was political, xenophobic or racist in nature," an increase from the 359 reported crimes in 1992 police reports.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ Demant, Sloodman, Buijs, and Tillie, 163.

⁷⁷ Bjørge and Carlsson, 13

⁷⁸ Heléne Lööw, "Racist Violence and Criminal Behavior in Sweden: Myths and Reality," In *Terror From The Extreme Right*, edited by Tore Bjørge. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1995, 130.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 133-134.

Unsurprisingly, during this time, there is a relationship between the number of racist and xenophobic crimes and the amount of neo-Nazi activity reported in the county. In 1993, the four counties with the highest number of crimes with racist motives – Stockholm (223 crimes), Västernorrland (92 crimes), Dalarna (72 crimes), and Västra Götaland (72 crimes), only Västernorrland had extremist activity rated as something other than “high” – its activity was rated as negligible.⁸⁰ Interestingly, and unexplainably, Västernorrland’s data is similar to the other countries in the northern part of Sweden where racist violence and far-right activity do not seem to be related.

The Creation of an Exit Program

It is with the background of changing demographics and a growing threat of right-wing extremist violence, that Sweden’s Exit program was born. With the Norwegian Exit program in its infancy but showing signs of promise, the leaders of the program latched onto the idea of spreading similar programs to surrounding areas with a demonstrated need. In 1996, the Norwegian leaders attended a conference with representatives from Fryshuset, a Swedish NGO.⁸¹ Fryshuset, founded in the fall of 1984 in conjunction with the YMCA, had already cemented itself as a cultural space for young adults that promoted “empowerment and tolerance by building social relations and interactions,” while maintaining that it was open to all who wished to participate in its activities that often range from sports to music and everything in between.⁸²

In addition to building relationships with Fryshuset, the leaders of the Norwegian Exit program, made sure to get buy-in from Kent Lindahl, a former neo-Nazi who had left the extremist ideology in the early 1990s and had begun traveling to Swedish schools with Jewish Holocaust survivors in the hopes of discouraging young people from joining similar groups.⁸³ Lindahl was intrigued by both the program and its success, and Exit in Sweden was formally established in 1998.

While keeping the same goals of deradicalizing and disengaging individuals involved in neo-Nazi and other far-right extremist groups as the Norwegian version, Sweden’s program had two major differences: the program would focus on individuals that reached out themselves for help in exiting violent groups (rather

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 136.

⁸¹ Maria Alvanou, “Swedish EXIT and international De-radicalization programs,” *Pemptousia*, 3 April 2015, <https://pemptousia.com/2015/04/swedish-exit-and-international-de-radicalization-programs-interview-with-the-inspiring-expert-robert-orell/>.

⁸² Christensen, 97-99.

⁸³ Bjørge, “Exit Neo-Nazism: Reducing Recruitment and Promoting Disengagement from Racist Groups,” 23.

than the program doing the proactive outreach) and a large percentage of the leadership of the program would not be researchers and other similar professionals, but former members of the far-right ideology. The two programmatic differences were intended to grow credibility and increase the likelihood of success. If the Exit program was only working with individuals who had, themselves, reached out for help in leaving the violent ideology, there was a greater chance that they were serious about making the necessary changes in their lives. As previously described, Sweden's neo-Nazi groups were relatively powerful, so there was a chance that someone looking to leave the group would be in physical danger; therefore, it was unlikely someone would risk bodily injury only to change their mind. The inclusion of former neo-Nazis as leaders in the program lent the program credibility with potential participants. Additionally, these former extremists were more easily able to "establish contact with youths who are considering disengaging from the movement."⁸⁴

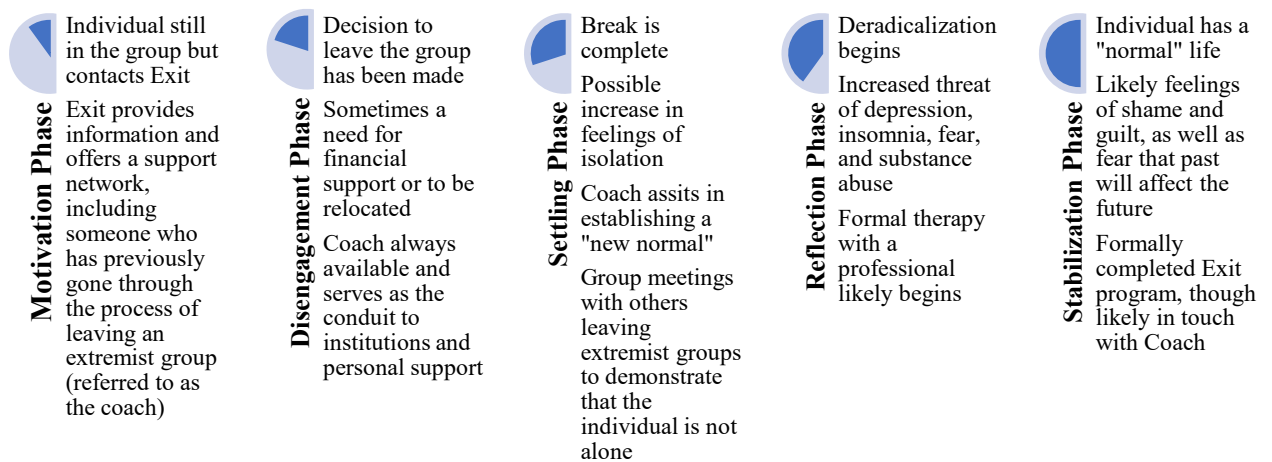
The Five-Step Process

Because participation was predicated on an interested individual reaching out to Exit Sweden, there was less of a need in this program, as opposed to the Norwegian program, to demonstrate that there was life outside of the extremist group or to convince the individual that leaving was even an option. Therefore, the program set out to address the "practical, social, and emotional" needs of their participants and developed a five step process to do so.⁸⁵ This process, as seen in Figure 6, helps to walk an individual through the entire disengagement and deradicalization process with a realization that it is likely that it will take between six to twelve months, if not longer.

⁸⁴ Demant, Sloodman, Buijs, and Tillie, 163.

⁸⁵ "English Summary, Exit: A follow-up and evaluation of the organization for people wishing to leave racist and nazi groups," Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ), 2001, 46.
https://www.bra.se/download/18_cba82f7130f475a2f1800028108/1371914734840/2001_exit_a_follow-up_and_evaluation.pdf

SWEDEN EXIT PROCESS (FIGURE 6)⁸⁶



It is important to emphasize that staff within the program *do not* address ideology or attempt to challenge the beliefs of far-right extremist groups. According to literature on the program, the reason that staff avoid challenging extremist ideology directly is that the groups “school their members with all the relevant counter-arguments so this can be a futile approach to take and simply put the young person into defensive mode.”⁸⁷ Rather, the focus is on reintegrating individuals back into society, while providing them with the mental and financial support required to turn away from their former lives.

Because the push and pull of involvement with extremist ideologies is rarely an easy string to sever, individuals often oscillate between steps. The progression of disengagement and deradicalization usually does not follow a linear path, and instead involves “relapses into old patterns of behaviour and thought” that may cause an individual to revert back to previous phases for a time period.⁸⁸ This constant struggle and potential backsliding for individuals leaving extremism is one of the main reasons that Exit Sweden emphasizes the necessity of building a relationship between an exiting individual and their coach (as described in the five step process in Figure 6). A key part of this client/coach relationship is the participation in interactions and activities outside of the extremist groups, which help “the client [in] coping in new settings and entering different worlds.”⁸⁹ The coach’s presence in these situations not only provides

⁸⁶ Demant, Sloodman, Buijs, and Tillie, 163-164.

⁸⁷ “Case Study Report: EXIT Fryshuset, Sweden,” Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 1998, https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/90/134/63/

⁸⁸ Tina Wilchen Christensen, “A Question of Participation – Disengagement from the Extremist Right: A case study of Sweden,” (PhD diss., Roskilde University, October 2015), 82. https://rucforsk.ruc.dk/ws/files/56384428/twc_fin_ny.pdf

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 101.

support in navigating situations that an individual may not have experienced since joining a neo-Nazi group, but also can be used to discuss the interactions at a later time to determine what other support might be necessary. Especially in the early days of disengagement, a coach and staff from the Exit program are available twenty-four hours a day to step in at a moment's notice, often taking the place of family and friends that have left behind.

Coaches are an integral part to the success or failure of Exit Sweden's program; therefore, training them to best help their clients is an important part of how the program is designed. Because many of these coaches are former members of extreme far-right groups themselves, an early part of the program is teaching them how to relate to their clients in the most successful way. More experienced coaches and professional counselors help new coaches break down issues that their clients may have "by deconstructing a situation into small pieces, making it possible to see how A might lead to B."⁹⁰ As individuals leaving extremist groups are learning how to reintegrate into society and social situations, one of the most important messages of coaches and the Exit program in general is that they have the ability to influence situations – ultimately, that these experiences do not have a predetermined conclusion. Coaches learn how to communicate through these situations, but ultimately to realize that each individual is different and what works with one person leaving extremist groups may not translate directly to someone else.

Like all forms of therapy, the Exit program is not an exact science and coaches act as an important point by which the program can be tailored. However, coaches may face negative effects from participating in the program if the individual that they are working with more quickly goes through the phases of deradicalization and disengagement than the coach did or if situations with their client cause them to backslide. As discussed, disengagement and deradicalization is not a linear path and coaches – even those that have been removed from their former extremist group for long periods of time – can be at risk. The European Commission's examination of the Exit program emphasizes this possibility and details the possible need to have a chain of coaches that are available if a client surpasses their coach in their process.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *ibid*, 148.

⁹¹ "Swedish method of working with formers in Exit work," European Commission, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7415_en.

Support Outside of The Five Step Process

Even though Exit Sweden focuses the majority of its resources on therapies, support, and programs that directly interface with individuals leaving violent right-wing extremist groups, Exit Sweden does provide assistance in other areas, as well. Although they do not play as large a role as the program in Norway, Sweden's Exit program has a supporting program for parents in the Klippan area.⁹² Additionally, parents unable to receive assistance through that can turn to the Exit program itself for help in understanding both the nature of the group that their child has been a part of as well as how they should approach their children and how they can be supportive during the disengagement and deradicalization process. Specifically, Exit offers services ranging from helping to "convene meetings between the family and a range of service providers... [and] assist with police contact and protection where the family has been threatened by the group."⁹³

In addition to providing direct support to family members, Exit also provides resources to professionals that come into contact with young people of how to understand neo-Nazi groups, their ideology, and the warning signs that an individual may be at risk for joining such a group or has recently joined one. These targeted professionals include teachers, counselors, police, and social services workers, and the program goes as far as to teach them how to reach out to individuals within the movements and conduct case work to support them if they decide to disengage from their current activities.⁹⁴ According to data from Exit's program, these resources and lectures are in such high demand that in 2001 they were turning down roughly a quarter of all requests because they did not have the necessary staff to complete them.⁹⁵ By 2001, Exit had supplied resources or conducted lectures on 179 occasions – the majority of them – 63% - at institutions of higher education.⁹⁶

Exit Motala

In addition to the Exit Sweden program, which is sometimes referred to Exit Stockholm or Exit Fryshuset in current literature, there is a similar program in Motala (referred to subsequently as Exit Motala) that was

⁹² "English Summary, Exit: A follow-up and evaluation of the organization for people wishing to leave racist and nazi groups,"

⁹³ "Case Study Report: EXIT Fryshuset, Sweden,"

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ "Exit för avhoppare: En uppföljning och utvärdering av verksamheten åren 1998-2001," Brottsförebyggande rådet centrum för kunskap om brott och åtgärder mot brott, Stockholm: Elanders Gotab (2001), 31.

https://www.bra.se/download/18.cba82f7130f475a2f1800019088/1371914731757/2001_8_exit_for_avhoppare.pdf

⁹⁶ *ibid*

founded in 1999. Exit Motala diverges in a number of ways from Exit Sweden that make comparisons between them virtually meaningless. Instead of focusing exclusively on individuals leaving neo-Nazi organizations, Exit Motala also has programs for “marginalised young immigrants from violent groups... [and] asylum seekers.”⁹⁷ The program geared towards immigrants and asylum seekers, called Amir, was expanded in 2002.⁹⁸ Notably, though it has separate programs for those leaving right-wing extremism, immigrants, asylum seekers, and women who are involved in neo-Nazi groups, Exit Motala does make an effort to integrate the groups in as many activities as they can. Although clearly in early stages or in counseling and group discussions of

Additionally, their goals are much broader. Though deradicalization and disengagement is, of course, a key focus, they also highlight the “promotion of democratic principles” and “combating of racism and marginalization.”⁹⁹ By highlighting these components, Exit Motala had virtually abandoned the principle of Exit Sweden to not engage on ideology. Although the two programs initially worked very closely together, by late 2001 any cooperation had virtually ceased. In addition to the ideological differences between Exit Motala and Exit Sweden, there was a “bitter dispute” between leaders of the programs.¹⁰⁰ Anita Bjargvide, a social worker who had taken over Exit Motala, accused Exit Sweden of “lacking proper oversight” that was leading to fraud including a deliberate inflation of the number of people it had helped to leave neo-Nazi groups in order for the government to increase its funding levels.¹⁰¹ After the split, Exit Motala has been run with government funds.

Exit Sweden’s Success

Like with most programs that receive government funding, the Swedish government ordered an evaluation of the program to determine its efficacy and whether continued funding was warranted. The Swedish Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) was tasked with the evaluation after three years of Exit Sweden’s work with extreme far-right groups in 2001. According to the BRÅ’s evaluation, over 90 percent of the individuals that passed through Exit Sweden were young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-

⁹⁷ Demant, Sloodman, Buijs, and Tillie, 165

⁹⁸ *ibid*

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ Liz Fekete, “Exit from White Supremacism: the accountability gap in Europe’s de-radicalisation programmes,” Institute of Race Relations European Research Programme, Briefing No. 8, Sept. 2014, 3. <http://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/wpmedia.outlandish.com/irr/2017/04/26155140/ERP-Briefing-No-8-Exit.pdf>.

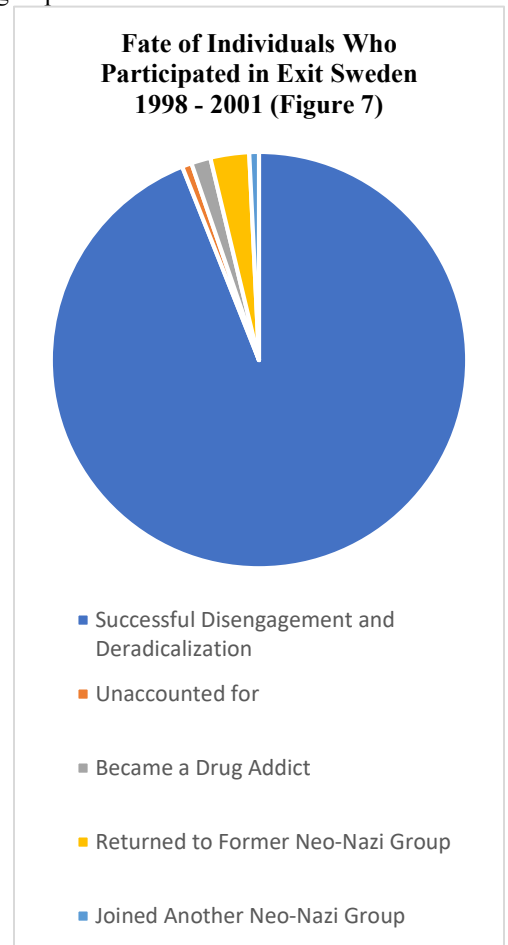
¹⁰¹ *ibid*

five, statistics that were consistent with the overall make-up of far-right groups.¹⁰²

By this time, approximately 133 individuals had gone through Exit Sweden – and the vast majority were considered to be successful disengagement and deradicalizations. As demonstrated in Figure 7, 125 of the 133 individuals had left far-right extremist groups – a 94 percent success rate.¹⁰³ However, it is important to highlight that five of the individuals that were considered to be successful had been involved in the program for less than one month. Therefore, it is very difficult to truly say that they have completely disengaged and deradicalized; a reexamination of their situations after the passage of more time is warranted. Overall, out of the 125 individuals who left neo-Nazi groups,

five had been part of the program for less than one month; thirty for between one and six months; 50 between seven months and a year; and fifteen for between fourteen months and three years.¹⁰⁴ Because each individual attempting to separate himself (or herself) from right-wing extremist groups has a different path, it is impossible to draw any conclusions from how long a person participates in Exit. Just because someone has been involved for three years does not necessarily mean

that they have made progress the entire time and have reached the Stabilization Phase, just as someone who has only been involved for six months cannot necessarily be assumed to be in one of the earlier phases. As previously discussed, individuals can vacillate between phases; even when they are almost completely disengaged, they may suffer setbacks that send them spiraling back several phases. Therefore, using an individual's length of time in the Exit Sweden program is not a particularly useful gauge of success or even of progress.



SOURCE: EMMA DISLEY, KRISTIN WEED, ANAÏS REDING, LINDSAY CLUTTERBUCK, AND RICHARD WARNES, "INDIVIDUAL DISENGAGEMENT FROM AL QA'IDA-INFLUENCED TERRORIST GROUPS: A RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT TO INFORM POLICY AND PRACTICE IN PREVENTING TERRORISM."

¹⁰² Demant, Sloodman, Buijs, and Tillie, 164.

¹⁰³ Emma Disley, Kristin Weed, Anaïs Reding, Lindsay Clutterbuck, and Richard Warnes, "Individual disengagement from Al Qa'ida-influenced terrorist groups: A Rapid Evidence Assessment to inform policy and practice in preventing terrorism," Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism- UK Home Office, Occasional Paper 99, November 2011, 116.

¹⁰⁴ "Exit för avhoppare: En uppföljning och utvärdering av verksamheten åren 1998-2001," 21.

The data gathered by the BRÅ does have some interesting statistics on when individuals (who are considered to have successfully disengaged and deradicalized) first reached out to Exit for help and on what phase they reported to be on when they left the program, as not all individuals stay in contact with the program through all of the phases. While the vast majority of these individuals – 83 out of 133 – reach out to Exit while they are in the first two steps of the process, 16 individuals began their engagement with the Exit program after they had already completed the initial steps of removing themselves from the far-right ideology and joined the program during the Settling Phase (phase three) or later.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, most individuals left Exit during the latter half of the program, with 42 leaving during the Reflection Phase (phase four) and 25 during the Stabilization Phase (phase five). This would seem to indicate that individuals who began the program stayed to work through many of the phases. However, there is no information about whether those that left later in the program joined during later phases, leaving open the possibility that some joined during the third phase and the left during the fourth phase.

While the program seems to have been successful in the first several years of its existence, evaluating data from a longer period of time it useful for gauging the long-term viability of the program. Robert Örell, the Assistant Direct of Exit Sweden, provided general data in 2008, which incorporates ten years of the program's existence. He said that the program had served around 600 individuals and that only two were known to them as having returned to the far-right extremist movement.¹⁰⁶ However, more in-depth information on yearly statistics, specifically those of a similar nature to the BRÅ are unavailable. The only data that is available details how many new cases by year Exit Sweden had from 2005 – 2009, with additional data on individuals that were still receiving services or after-program support. Generally, the number of new cases per year ranged from between 25 and 50, with the highest number of new cases occurring in 2006 (51) and the lowest occurring in 2007 and 2009 (26 each).¹⁰⁷ Without more details and information on new individuals that joined and left the program after 2001, it is difficult to analyze whether the program continued to have the same high rates of success that it enjoyed in its first three years of existence. Additionally, more information is needed to ensure that those individuals classified as

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ Tore Bjørgo, Jaap van Donselaar, and Sara Grunenberg, "Exit from right-wing extremist groups: lessons from disengagement programmes in Norway, Sweden and Germany," In *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and collective disengagement*, edited by Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan. New York: Routledge, 2009, 39.

¹⁰⁷ Anna-Lena Lodenius, "Utredning av Exit-projektet," In *Utvärdering av EXIT – Fryshuset avhopparverksamhet: Delrapport kring insatser för unga som vill lämna grupper som använder våld och hot för att nå politiska mål*, Stockholm: Ungdomsstyrelsen (2010), 12. <https://www2.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/butiksadmin/showDoc/ff80808127e2ac190128babe13ef003c/w>

successfully having disengaged and deradicalized in 2001 continued on that path or rejoined their former movements.

The Challenges and Failures of Exit Sweden

As detailed above, one of the most significant challenges in judging how successful the Exit Sweden program was after its initial three-year evaluation is the lack of specific data sets. The lack of data can be traced directly to Sweden's Personal Data Act, which prevents storing detailed, sensitive data.¹⁰⁸ Non-governmental organizations, including Exit, are not allowed to "maintain a database of their former clients' home or work addresses;"¹⁰⁹ instead, they are permitted only to use a client's "name, birth year, and what county they are from or reside in."¹¹⁰ This clearly presents a barrier to following up with former clients and determining how well they have maintained their disengaged status. The lack of data prevents both internal and external evaluations of the overall program and its specific parts, which could lead to changes that improve the efficacy of the program. While protecting the personal data of citizens is a noble and worthwhile goal, in this case it interferes with auditing the program and decisions on funding the program would be made with only partial, unverifiable data.

Because the program deals with sensitive topics and potentially violent situations, it is important that it is able to maintain dedicated, well-trained staff. High staff turnover was one of the main problems flagged by the 2001 BRÅ evaluation, particularly as more than half of the thirteen staff members that had been hired in the program's first three years had left the program before the end of 2001, including all the staff members hired from July 1998 through the end of 2000.¹¹¹ The report points out that turnover of this magnitude is not unusual for an organization "established by committed enthusiasts"¹¹² and that their administrative inexperience is often the cause. However, high staff turnover hampered the program's attempts to expand, and increased participation in the program – as new individuals join and existing clients continue to work through the phases – would likely exacerbate the issue. The very characteristics that give the program such credibility, particularly the presence of staff with their own experiences with far-right extremist groups can

¹⁰⁸ Anna-Lena Lodenius, "To leave a destructive life full of hate: The Story of Exit in Sweden," trans. Tanya Silverman, Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2010), 18. <https://annalenalod.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/exit-evaluation-2010-lodenius.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Jessica Eve Stern, "X: A Case Study of a Swedish Neo-Nazi and His Reintegration into Swedish Society," *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 32 no. 3 (May/June 2014), 440-453.

¹¹⁰ Lodenius, "To leave a destructive life full of hate: The Story of Exit in Sweden," 18.

¹¹¹ "Exit för avhoppare: En uppföljning och utvärdering av verksamheten åren 1998-2001," 15.

¹¹² Bjørge and Carlsson, 73.

be one of the very issues that causes the program to fail because they do not have the experience to lead or manage staff. Finding a balance between the two is clearly a key in a successful continuation of the program, but it is unclear how – or if – the organization addressed this issue.

The program also had serious issues with mismanagement and misappropriation of funds. As previously discussed, the leader of the Exit Motala program had made allegations into consequences from the lack of oversight of Exit Sweden, and her allegations bore fruit in 2002 when Kent Lindahl, one of the founders of Exit Sweden was stripped of his control over the program's funds after the disappearance of a substantial sum of money.¹¹³ Lindahl was forced to pay back 60,000 Swedish Krona that had mysteriously vanished from Exit's funds – allegedly taken from the 1.6 million SEK that the program had received in government grants that year.¹¹⁴ Additionally, material donations and technical equipment were found to be missing from the program and the combination of these issues led to an organizational shakeup whereby Exit Sweden was "reorganized under the umbrella of the Fryshuset youth foundation."¹¹⁵ However, this reorganization did not make substantial changes to the program to ensure that similar behaviors were not repeated or that the risks of hiring former extremists – no matter how deradicalized – were mitigated.

Conclusion

Although Norway and Sweden developed their disengagement and deradicalization programs at virtually the same time, the demographics and size of their neo-Nazi populations were vastly different and led to significant differences between the programs – though relatively similar outcomes. The age of the populations they were addressing seems to be one of the key factors in necessitating different programmatic structures – Norway's younger population allowed for interventions focused on parental networks and discussions of future opportunities, while Sweden's older neo-Nazi population required a five-step process built around the needs of young adults. How the program identified potential participants was also dissimilar and may be traced to the age of the population, as well. Exit Sweden required proactive outreach on the part of an individual wishing to leave far-right extremism, possibly because the group that it served were all adults and would be resistant to leaving if they were approached by outside forces. Finally, the

¹¹³ Peter Karlsson and Catherine Larsson, "Ledaren får inte ha hand om Exits pengar," *Aftonbladet*, 26 February 2002. <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/218Xgl/ledaren-far-inte-ha-hand-om-exits-pengar>

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, tools and programs for countering violent extremism*, New York: Routledge (2017), 192.

staffing of the two programs took divergent approaches. While Norway's program focused on professionals, like teachers, social workers, and researchers, Sweden's program was mainly staffed and led by former members of neo-Nazi groups that had, themselves, disengaged and deradicalized. This difference in personnel can be seen in how the programs are structured and how they walk their participants through the process.

Both programs, however, are structured to address all of the needs – mental and physical – of people departing from extremist groups. Recognizing that there are often unmet needs that drive individuals to join these groups, both the Norwegian and Swedish programs help disengaged persons to realize that they can meet these needs outside of the group. Both programs place a heavy emphasis on educational and social support, which can allow individuals to become fully functioning members of society. Though there is no religious component to the far-right extremist groups, the Exit programs are constituted in a similar manner to those that address religious extremism. This is demonstrated by the expansion of the Exit Sweden into addressing issues of asylum seekers and immigrants who are at risk of radicalization in different ways.

The available data indicates that both programs were demonstrably successful in addressing deradicalization and disengagement for their targeted populations with high success rates. However, there are lingering concerns for both programs. Because the Norwegian Exit program was short-lived, the available data on what happened to its participants is virtually non-existent. Additionally, as the program lasted for only several years and the problem of right-wing radicalism was judged to be taken care of, it seems to have left a void that has allowed the problem to once again resurface. The Norwegian government may be well served by examining if a similar program would be helpful once again. Like Norway, the evidence surrounding Exit Sweden shows very positive results, but the overall data is very limited by the country's personal data protection laws. These laws hamper efforts to follow up with individuals who have been a part of the program in the past to see if they are maintain their deradicalized status. The use of former extremists within the program has also caused significant issues in the past and a reorganization of the program did not seek to address many of these concerns.

Collectively, the Exit programs in Sweden and Norway seemed to have paved the way for deradicalization programs across the globe. There are many lessons that can be learned from these programs, including how to tailor the programs best for populations of different ages and how the use of former extremists can build

credibility for a program and entice members to leave those groups. There is certainly a need for more data on these programs, even though aspects of them may not have been in existence for more than fifteen years, as it is important to examine whether individuals who deradicalized and disengaged using these programs were able to maintain their status even after support by the program was limited or stopped completely.

Ultimately, Norway's and Sweden's Exit Programs can provide a template going forward as countries seek to develop their own programs. Although these programs do not have a religious component, the vast majority of the programs that have come later focus on Islamic extremism. However, these programs take much of the basic design of the non-religious extremism that Norway and Sweden helped to pioneer, specifically addressing some of the root causes of a person's journey to extremism, and add in aspects relating to religiosity. Programs in the Middle East, like the ones in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, bear a striking resemblance in some aspects to these programs with some noticeable difference.

Deradicalization and Counter-Radicalization: Breakthroughs in Combatting Terrorism in
Morocco and Saudi Arabia?

While terrorism is not a twenty-first century problem, as evidenced by the issues of white supremacy and white nationalism that existed across the globe throughout the twentieth century, the global aspect of Islamic terrorism has absolutely gained more attention. As terrorist incidents grew in size and scope in the last two decades, many countries in the Middle East and North Africa turned inward to examine how they were combatting the problem of their citizens radicalizing and committing attacks in their homelands and abroad, as well as joining extremist groups. As part of the solution, countries across the political and ethnic spectrum created deradicalization or counter-radicalization programs, oftentimes as part of a larger countering violent extremism (CVE strategy) that looked to prevent radicalization when possible and rehabilitate those with extremist ideologies when prevention was no longer an option.

This chapter examines the basic premises of counter-radicalization and deradicalization while considering how these concepts are applied in case studies of two countries, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. First, the chapter will explore the meaningful differences between counter-radicalization and deradicalization. It will then examine how Morocco has chosen to tackle radicalization through its deradicalization/counter-radicalization program; how the program operates within the country; and the success and failures of the program. This chapter will then walk through Saudi Arabia's deradicalization program; how it was developed the program; the inner workings of the program; and, finally, attempt to discern its successes and failures. Additionally, each case study will examine how the country's interpretation of Islam affects its efforts to deradicalize or counter-radicalize and whether the interpretation itself may be cause for the very radicalization that the country is attempting to address.

Examining the ability for counter-radicalization or deradicalization programs to be successful can have long-term consequences on how countries and governments fight terrorism and other extremist ideologies. If these programs are successful and can show a correlation between participation in these programs and a sustained reduction in the number of terrorist incidents within a given country, as well as the number of citizens from the country who join radical groups, it may provide a pathway toward addressing the growing extremism problem.

Counter-Radicalization and Deradicalization

Deradicalization and counter-radicalization are concepts that have existed in political science and psychology for decades, though the first formal deradicalization study was only conducted in 1988.¹¹⁶ However, with the events of September 11, 2001 and the Western world's rededication to combatting terrorism, some of the emphasis across the globe "has shifted towards understanding and dealing with the reasons that people become terrorists."¹¹⁷ Further, pushed by internal politics, as well as external pressures, many countries, especially across the Middle East and North Africa find themselves with jails full of terrorists or those with radical ideological sentiments that need to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. Thus, countries turned to deradicalization and counter-radicalization programs to help them fight radical ideologies.

Counter-Radicalization

Counter-radicalization programs seek to address issues before they begin. By focusing on "strengthening and empowering... the community from which [terrorists] might emerge and which might, if neglected be deemed potentially supportive of them," counter-radicalization "has an anticipatory thrust."¹¹⁸ Counter-radicalization has, at its core, the "assumption that society, government, and communities all have a shared interest in preventing terrorist attacks, and that those communities which – for whatever reason – are targeted by terrorists for radicalization and recruitment need to be protected, strengthen, and empowered in order to help them resist violent extremism."¹¹⁹

Counter-radicalization programs, by very definition, seek to address the very issues that extremists use to radicalize individuals. As such, it is a "policy theme, not a single policy"¹²⁰ and should be multi-faceted in its implementation. Countering the ideology of whichever radical group the government is fighting, however, is key, and often this means meeting the ideology head-on by pushing the contradictions of the

¹¹⁶ James A. Aho, "Out of Hate: A Sociology of Defection from Neo-Nazism," *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 11, no. 4 (1988).

¹¹⁷ Richard Barrett and Laila Bokhari, "Deradicalization and rehabilitation programmes targeting religious terrorists and extremists in the Muslim world: An overview," in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and collective disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 170.

¹¹⁸ Alex P. Schmid., "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague (March 2013), 50, https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013_2.pdf.

¹¹⁹ National Security Preparedness Group, "Preventing Violent Radicalization in America," The Bipartisan Policy Center, Washington, D.C. (June 2011), 17-18, <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/NSPG.pdf>.

¹²⁰ National Security Preparedness Group, 18.

extremist ideology into the forefront; challenging the assumptions and beliefs behind the ideology; and politicizing the differences in interests of the adherents of the ideology, among others.¹²¹ While the number of programs and activities that can be created as part of a counter-radicalization strategy are almost endless, among the most common are education and training; media messaging; youth development; and public outreach.

Deradicalization

Though it has been studied for decades, there is a notable “lack of conceptual clarity”¹²² when discussing and studying deradicalization. The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group of Radicalisation and Extremism has adopted a definition for deradicalization as “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of reintegrating them into society or at least dissuading them for violence,”¹²³ which well-suits this paper and is applicable to all of the deradicalization programs discussed within. Deradicalization is both the process by which a person’s commitment to a radical ideology is dissipated, as well as the initiatives undertaken by countries to try “to achieve a reduction of risk of re-offending through addressing the specific and relevant disengagement issues.”¹²⁴ It should also be noted, that there is a scholarly dispute over the differences in deradicalization and disengagement (which is generally understood to be the act of leaving a violent group but possibly maintaining the belief in the group’s radical ideology), as well as which is a more important act. For the purposes of this chapter, deradicalization will be the favored action.

As mentioned above, deradicalization programs began to grow in popularity when governments across the globe, but especially in the Middle East and North Africa, found themselves with large populations of jailed terrorists and no hope of being able to reintegrate them into society. Therefore, state-sponsored deradicalization programs were created in countries such as Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, and Malaysia.¹²⁵ The vast majority of these programs, which include reeducation and rehabilitation components, “have an ideological foundation”¹²⁶ that is used to argue against and delegitimize the radical

¹²¹ Schmid, 51

¹²² Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, “Introduction,” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and collective disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

¹²³ Schmid, 41.

¹²⁴ John Horgan, *Walking Away From Terrorism: Accounts from Radical and Extremist Movements*, London: Routledge, 2009, 153.

¹²⁵ Darcy M.E. Noricks, “Disengagement and Deradicalization: Processes and Programs,” in *Social Science for Counterterrorism*, eds. Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2009), 306.

¹²⁶ *ibid*

ideology of the participant. Countries often encourage well-respected religious scholars from the community to engage with those professing a radical ideology, and evidence widely supports the argument that many (if not most) individuals who have been radicalized lack a formal or extensive religious education.¹²⁷

Case Study: Morocco

Morocco, like many countries, was forced to reevaluate their internal prospective and priorities on addressing radicalization when the country was hit by a large-scale terrorist attack. Unlike many other Middle Eastern countries who had seen their safety and security marred by terrorist attacks within the boundaries of their states, Morocco had escaped substantial terrorist attacks on its soil for years. However, on May 16, 2003, coordinated attacks carried out by suicide bombers targeted “Jewish, Spanish and Belgian” targets across the city of Casablanca.¹²⁸ The attacks killed more than thirty civilians, as well as twelve suicide bombers.

Government Reforms Follow Terrorist Incidents

With the attacks in Casablanca serving as a wake-up call, Moroccan authorities expressed concern that they were unable to verify the locations of more than 600 citizens believed to have trained or fought in conflict zones, which they feared could lead to even more attacks against civilians within the country.¹²⁹

Consequently, the government undertook a set wide-reaching reforms, aimed at addressing issues within the police force, military, and legislative bodies. The Moroccan government increased the security presence at locations that could become targets for terrorists, specifically in places where large numbers of Westerners and tourists gathered.¹³⁰

The Moroccan parliament passed the Law to Combat Terror that expanded the definition of what could be considered terrorism and how long a detainee could be held before being brought before a judge, though observers expressed significant concerns that the legislation would have negative implications for human

¹²⁷ Christopher Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (September 2008), 14, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp97_boucek_saudi_final.pdf.

¹²⁸ Douglas Jehl, “Aftereffects: Morocco; Suicide Bombs Kill at Least 14 in Casablanca,” *The New York Times*, 17 May 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/17/world/aftereffects-morocco-suicide-bombs-kill-at-least-14-in-casablanca.html>.

¹²⁹ Rogelio Alonso & Marcos García Rey, “The Evolution of Jihadist Terrorism in Morocco,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4, 598.

¹³⁰ Alonso and Rey, 585.

rights.¹³¹ There was also additional scrutiny placed on bank transfers of funds that could possibly be used to finance terrorism. The government also devoted resources to modernizing the police force, including increasing the number of police officers within disadvantaged areas around the country.¹³²

Violent Extremists Leaving Morocco

While terrorism within Moroccan borders was almost unheard of, Moroccan citizens were involved in international terrorism “including attacks against different targets and the recruitment of individuals to travel to conflict zones such as Bosnia, Chechnya, Indonesia, and Afghanistan” and were “heavily influenced by the increasing relevance of the global jihadist movement.”¹³³ After the events in Casablanca in 2003, the government’s renewed commitment to combatting violent extremism facilitated the conviction and imprisonment of more than 1400 men for being suspected militants with extremist ties.¹³⁴ However, that has not prevented Moroccan citizens from being involved in high profile incidents or international terrorism, including the 2004 bombing of commuter trains in Madrid, Spain.¹³⁵ It is through this lens that Morocco’s counter-radicalization and deradicalization programs should be examined.

Morocco’s Counter-Radicalization Program, with a Side of Deradicalization

Morocco, like many countries in the Middle East and North Africa, has a very young population with at least seventy percent of the population under the age of thirty, which makes it fertile ground for possible terrorist recruitment.¹³⁶ Morocco’s counter-radicalization program, which began in earnest after the Casablanca attack of 2003, is one of the most all-encompassing, “far-reaching, and comprehensive in Muslim majority states.”¹³⁷

Morocco’s Islam

¹³¹ “Morocco: Human Rights at a Crossroads,” *Human Rights Watch*, 16, no. 6 (October 2004), 26, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/morocco1004/morocco1004.pdf>.

¹³² Alonso and Rey, 586.

¹³³ *ibid.*, 571-572.

¹³⁴ “Morocco,” *Background Information Summaries*, International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, (March 3, 2012), 1.

¹³⁵ “Morocco.”

¹³⁶ Emily Boulter, “Morocco’s war on terror and the threat of ISIS,” *Global Risk Insights*, 6 April 2016, <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/04/morocco-war-on-terror-threat-of-isis/>.

¹³⁷ Daniel Koehler and John Horgan, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 268.

Morocco's unique take on counter-radicalization and deradicalization is greatly influenced by the country's take on Islam and Islamic law. Morocco is a "society that is characterized by its cultural, ethnic and intellectual diversity" that is "united by common adherence to the Sunni branch of Islam under the legal school of Maliki thought."¹³⁸ Within the country, the king is recognized as the "Commander of the Faithful" and has enormous influence over the religious perspectives of the country's Muslim citizens.¹³⁹ With this "monopoly on domestic religious authority that shuts out radical proponents of political Islam," the king, and by extension the Moroccan government, has "more spiritual credibility than many other regional governments" and has the ability to shut down or mitigate more radical proponents in Islam.¹⁴⁰ This influence places the government "directly into the day-to-day spiritual lives of Moroccan Muslims" and, according to Mbarka Bouaida, a high-ranking government official in Morocco, seeks to insulate the faithful from extremism and terrorism, as well as to preserve the country's "moderate Islam."¹⁴¹

Religious Monitoring Programs

As part of their mission to promote only a moderate version of Islam, the government is involved in almost every aspect of Islam within the country. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was created in the wake of the 2003 Casablanca attack and has grown in prominence in the last fourteen years. Its mission is "to prevent the most radical form of Salafism" from spreading through the country.¹⁴² The Ministry monitors and oversees the religious education throughout the country, and as part of this process, it strictly monitors the over 30,000 mosques through the country¹⁴³, with regular Friday services routinely observed.¹⁴⁴ As part of this process, mosques found to be out of compliance with the standards and regulations set by the government find themselves shuttered.¹⁴⁵

Imam Training

¹³⁸ Mohammed El-Katiri, "The institutionalization of religious affairs: religious reform in Morocco," *The Journal of North African Studies* 18, no. 1 (2013), 55.

¹³⁹ Lindsay Clutterbuck, "Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism: A Perspective on the Challenges and Benefits," *Middle East Institute*, 10 June 2015, http://www.mei.edu/content/deradicalization-programs-and-counterterrorism-perspective-challenges-and-benefits#_ftn17.

¹⁴⁰ Mohamed Salah Tamek, "Morocco's Approach to Countering Violent Extremism," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 16 May 2014, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/moroccos-approach-to-countering-violent-extremism>

¹⁴¹ Paul D. Shinkman, "Can Government Purge Extremism from Islam?" *U.S. News & World Report*, 16 April 2015, <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/04/16/moroccan-government-delves-into-citizens-religious-lives-to-purge-extremism>.

¹⁴² Alonso and Rey, 586.

¹⁴³ *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ Shinkman

¹⁴⁵ Alexis Arief, "Morocco: Current Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, 18 October 2013, 7.

One of the key facets of Morocco's counter-radicalization program addresses the training of imams within the country. As part of this strategy, King Mohammed VI built a vast center in the middle of Rabat to educate and train imams and the next generation of Muslim leaders, both inside and outside Morocco.¹⁴⁶ Pulling students from across the Muslim world, Morocco hopes to export its anti-extremism version of Islam – putting it at odds with countries like Saudi Arabia that tend to export extremely strict interpretations. Abdessalem Lazaar, the head of the institute, sums up the center's mission thusly, “Morocco chose the true path of Islam and it will prevail... I am talking about a moderate, positive, inclusive Islam.”¹⁴⁷

The Mohammed VI Institute for Imam Training, thus far seems to be a considerable success, having trained 447 foreign imams, with agreements from Russia and Senegal to train imams for those countries, as well.¹⁴⁸ Opened in late 2015, the school had the ability to educate around one thousand students at a time until it expanded in late 2016 to allow for around 1,400 students to enroll simultaneously.¹⁴⁹ Though students receive extensive religious training, unlike in Islamic schools in other countries, their studies are “divided evenly between religion and the humanities” and vocational training in electrical engineering, agriculture, sewing, and computer use is also offered.¹⁵⁰ Foreign students also take classes on the history and institutions for their respective countries, and instruction is done not only in Arabic but in the national languages of the school's students.¹⁵¹

Another marked difference in the Mohammed VI Institute from many other Islamic schools across the world is its ability and desire to educate an almost equal number of men and women; of the two hundred and fifty new students accepted annually, one hundred fifty are men and one hundred are women.¹⁵²

Morocco's expanded commitment to educating women as preachers and leaders in Islam dates to the days immediately following the attack in Casablanca. The *mourchidat* program, which launched as a pilot

¹⁴⁶ Kevin Connolly, “Battle of ideas at heart of fight against Islamic State,” *BBC News*, 17 March 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35714703>.

¹⁴⁷ Connolly

¹⁴⁸ Malika Layadi, “Will Morocco's imam training program work?” *Global Risk Insights*, 10 September 2016, <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/09/will-morocco-imam-training-work/>.

¹⁴⁹ Ilan Berman, “Morocco's Islamic Exports,” *Foreign Affairs*, 12 May 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-05-12/morocco-islamic-exports>.

¹⁵⁰ Berman

¹⁵¹ Ruth Grosrichard, “Au Maroc, former des imams africains et français pour lutter contre le terrorisme,” *Le Monde Afrique*, 10 January 2016, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/01/20/au-maroc-former-des-imams-africains-et-francais-pour-lutter-contre-le-terrorisme_4850616_3212.html.

¹⁵² Berman

program within the Moroccan Ministry of Islamic Affairs, sought to use the “soft power of religious women to quell violence before it happens” in process often referred to as “spiritual security.”¹⁵³ The program promotes women’s rights and requires students to have college degrees and recite sections of the Qur’an from memory; graduates of the program will be sent across the country to serve as counselors, teach tolerance and diffuse extremist thought, lead discussions, and answer questions about the Islamic faith.¹⁵⁴

The program director, Abdelslam El-Azar, says that “the women scholars are even more important than men,” and the program is a logical extension of women’s place within society.¹⁵⁵ In Moroccan society – as in many places across the world – women are much more likely to make frequent contact with members of society that may be at risk for radicalization because of their frequent social contacts with all members of a community, where men may be restricted in their contacts with women and younger children. Additionally, women often serve as the primary educators of children, so the program seeks to leverage this educational component by arming women with a formal religious education that they can use to counsel – or deradicalize if necessary – members of the community. With the number of women actively involved in the Islamic State and “essentially becoming the glue holding the system together,”¹⁵⁶ the growth and education of the *mourchidat* program could well be one of the most important parts of Morocco’s counter-radicalization program.¹⁵⁷

With the success of both the *mourchidat* program and the Mohammed VI Institute for Imam Training, Morocco expanded their mission to pushing moderate Islam. By launching the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Oulema in June 2016, the king reiterated his commitment to “supporting Moroccan and African theologians and scholars in promoting religious tolerance and moderation” across the continent. The Foundation also will set up schools and cultural centers to spread moderate Islam across the continent, modeled after the Mohammed VI Institute for Imam Training.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Samantha Harrington, “Women provide ‘spiritual security’ in Morocco,” *Thomson Reuters Foundation News*, 12 December 2013, <http://news.trust.org/item/20131212010325-jkva6/>.

¹⁵⁴ Harrington

¹⁵⁵ Dina Temple-Raston, “The Female Quran Experts Fighting Radical Islam in Morocco,” *The Atlantic*, 12 February 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/the-female-quran-experts-fighting-radical-islam-in-morocco/551996/>

¹⁵⁶ “Women’s Connections in Extreme Networks,” *The University of Miami College of Arts & Sciences*, last modified June 29, 2016, <http://www.as.miami.edu/news/news-archive/womens-connections-in-extreme-networks-.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Pedro Manrique, Zhenfeng Cao, et al. “Women’s connectivity in extreme networks,” *Science Advances*, 2 no. 6 (June 2016), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/proxy1.library.jhu.edu/pmc/articles/PMC4928915/pdf/1501742.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ Caitlin Dearing Scott, “Morocco’s Recent Strides in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” *Moroccan American Center*, 9 June 2016, <http://moroccoonthemove.com/2016/06/09/moroccos-recent-strides-countering-terrorism-violent-extremism-caitlin-dearing-scott/#sthash.QLbEjOw.KZbmxc89.dpbs>

Media as a Conduit for Moderation

While ensuring that imams preaching and teaching within the country are presenting a moderate version of Islam that pushes back against extremism is key to minimize the jihadist threat within the country for the long-term, it is not the only part of Morocco's counter-radicalization strategy. Increasingly, the media is seen as a key tool to spread an Islam of tolerance. Since 2003, twenty-eight religious radio stations, including the government-run *King Muhammad VI* Radio Station have been licensed by the Moroccan government, with hundreds of religious discussions broadcast over the airwaves.¹⁵⁹ The establishment of the *King Muhammad VI* television channel, "which specializes in religion and religious education" broadcasts question and answer sessions as part of its daily programming.¹⁶⁰ Using the media to address religious questions allows for the country's moderate version of Islam to be found in all aspects of daily life – not just when someone goes to the masjid.

Prisoner Deradicalization

According to government officials and human rights monitoring groups, more than three thousand people have been imprisoned across Morocco for extremist activity. Within the prison system, deradicalization is "carried out by authorities from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and members of regional and local religious councils."¹⁶¹ The General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration (DGAPR) launched the formal prison deradicalization program called Moussalaha in 2016.¹⁶² Bouaida, who currently serves as the Minister-Delegate for Foreign Affairs says that, although there is a rate of recidivism, "It's under control... It did help a lot to diminish... or reduce the intensity of any threat... of the terrorist groups and the terrorist ideology."¹⁶³

As part of the effort to deradicalize prisoners, "economic reintegration assistance, vocational training, and university education" are all offered through the government or private entities.¹⁶⁴ One of the most successful efforts of Morocco's prisoner deradicalization effort is that of Mohamed Fizazi, a radical

¹⁵⁹ Hamed El-Said, "De-Radicalising Islamists: Programmes and their Impact in Muslim Majority States," *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence*, January 2012, 32.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*

¹⁶¹ Tamek

¹⁶² Mohammed Masbah and Souad Ahmadoun, "Morocco's Failure to Reintegrate Former Jihadis," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 6 February 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/78313>.

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ Koehler and Horgan, 268.

Salafist, who inspired generations to wage jihad and had ties to the 2003 Casablanca attack. After he was released from prison, “he exhibited sufficient transformation... [that] he was asked to lead Friday prayers in front of the king.”¹⁶⁵ The first cohort of Moussalaha completed the program in 2017 and was judged to be a huge success with participants being rewarded with reduced prison sentences.¹⁶⁶ Prisoners – evidently – reacted positively to the program, as well because the 2018 class had 300 applications for only 25 places in the program.

However, the program has received criticism for touting successful deradicalizations or prisoners that were already on the path to deradicalizing. The first Moussalaha class was made up of jihadist prisoners who had been in contact with the Mohammedia League for Scholars (Rabita) expressing that they were disillusioned with extremism and “sought dialogue with religious scholars and expressed their willingness to ‘repent.’”¹⁶⁷ Additionally, unlike many Western deradicalization programs, Moussalaha does not make an attempt to help deradicalized prisoners reintegrate into society upon their release. As many members of jihadist groups fell into extremism because of a search for a sense of belonging or for socioeconomical reasons, this is clearly a missed opportunity. It seems like that prisoners without support that includes education, job training, and counseling are more likely to be drawn back into extremism than those that have ongoing care, even after the completion of a deradicalization program.

Gauging the Effectiveness of the Program

The success of the Moroccan counter-radicalization and deradicalization program is difficult to calculate. Because the government has made long-term commitments and investments into changing the type of Islam that spreads throughout the country and the region, the success can only effectively be measured over the long-term. It is hard, if not impossible, to calculate the number of people who were positively impacted by the counter-radicalization program. There is little way to know who would be radicalized without the existence of the program, but there may be more concrete evidence in the future. However, it is possible to measure the number of terrorist incidents within the country itself, as well as how many of Morocco’s citizens are leaving the country to fight for extremist groups, particularly ISIS.

¹⁶⁵ Tamek

¹⁶⁶ Masbah and Ahmadoun

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*

Moroccan officials have greatly minimized the number of attacks taking place within their borders, since the Casablanca bombing in 2003, with the notable exception of a 2011 bombing of the main square in Marrakesh.¹⁶⁸ Morocco has also escaped much of the internal turmoil caused by radical groups within its borders that have greatly affected its neighbors. However, there are still a large number of foreign fighters leaving the country to wage jihad in conflict zones.

According to The Soufan Group, the Moroccan government estimates that, as of October 2015, there were approximately 1200 Moroccans serving as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq; however, non-official estimates indicate that the number is probably higher, with approximately 1500 fighters.¹⁶⁹ By January 2019, Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation (BCIJ) placed the number even higher at 1,666, including 289 women and 370 children.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, in data put together by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) indicates that Morocco has 35.4 fighters for every million citizens, placing it in their ranking between Trinidad and Tobago (35.7 fighters/one million citizens) and Austria (35.3 fighters/one million citizens)¹⁷¹, which was calculated by dividing the official number of ISIS fighters by the World Bank's population statistics.¹⁷² When evaluating the number of fighters that originate from a country, it is also important to consider the Muslim population within that country, not just the total citizenry. While Morocco was in the top twenty of the National Bureau of Economic Research's country rankings when judging by entire population, when looking at solely Muslim citizens, their position drops noticeably. With 35.4 fighters for every one million Muslims within the country, Morocco ranks fortieth, behind Albania and in front of Israel.¹⁷³

There is no question that Morocco continues to have a problem in exporting foreign fighters, especially to the conflict in Iraq and Syria and specifically to join the Islamic State. However, Morocco has made considerable investments into a long-term strategy to address radicalization within its citizenry. This counter-radicalization strategy has the potential to pay dividends for not only the country, but also for the

¹⁶⁸ "Morocco: Marrakesh bomb strikes Djemaa el-Fna square," *BBC News*, 28 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13226117>.

¹⁶⁹ "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq," *The Soufan Group*, New York, N.Y. (December 2015), http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf, 9.

¹⁷⁰ Samir El Ouardighi, "Terrorisme: En 4 ans, le BCIJ a arrêté près d'un millier d'individus," *Medias 24*, 4 January 2019. <https://www.medias24.com/MAROC/NATION/188871-Terrorisme-En-4-ans-le-BCIJ-a-arrete-pres-d-un-millier-d-individus.html>

¹⁷¹ Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?" *National Bureau of Economic Research*, Cambridge, M.A. (April 2016), 19.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 20.

entire continent, with the focus on spreading a moderate form of Islam. As the data relates specifically to their deradicalization program, which is concentrated almost entirely within the prison population, there is not enough data to verify that it actually works for the long-term.

Case Study: Saudi Arabia

Like Morocco, Saudi Arabia fell victim to a series of terrorist attacks in 2003 that targeted Western interests in the country. On May 12, bombs and gunmen targeted three heavily guarded housing compounds home to scores of Americans and other Westerners in Riyadh, killing thirty-nine.¹⁷⁴ Less than six months later, terrorists again attacked a housing compound in Riyadh on November 8, killing more than a dozen.¹⁷⁵ In the eighteen months after the initial attacks of May 2003, “more than 30 major terrorism-related incidents”, which killed ninety one and wounded five hundred and ten occurred.¹⁷⁶ These internal attacks, compounded by the participation of Saudi nationals into some of the most high profile worldwide terrorist attacks of the last two decades, including the September 11 attacks in the United States, pushed the Saudi government to take the threat of Islamic extremism more seriously. Recognizing that tightening the security apparatus within the country would not be sufficient enough to prevent further attacks, as well as the spread of radical ideologies, the Saudi government “recrafted its strategy to take on the radical ideologies that foster violent extremism.”¹⁷⁷

Wahhabism and the Debate Over Islamic Interpretation

While Morocco’s interpretation of Islam – and its emphasis on moderation – is an asset to its counter-radicalization and deradicalization plans, there is significant concern that Saudi’s brand of Islam actually creates the very extremism that its own deradicalization program is seeking to quell. Wahhabism focuses on the strict, literal interpretation of Qur’an with its most ardent adherents believing that those who don’t share their beliefs – even fellow Muslims – are “heathens and enemies.”¹⁷⁸ The Saudi monarchy, and thus the entire governing structure of the country, is woven tightly with Wahhabism. In fact, the current Saudi

¹⁷⁴ Owen Bowcott and David Pallister, “‘The message is: you’re not safe here,’” *The Guardian*, 13 May 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/may/14/alqaida.saudi-arabia1>.

¹⁷⁵ “Saudi official blames Riyadh attacks on al Qaeda,” *CNN*, 9 November 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/11/08/saudi.explosion/>.

¹⁷⁶ Angel Rabasa et al., “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists,” RAND Corporation, Washington, D.C. (2010), 56.

¹⁷⁷ Abdullah F. Ansary, “Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia’s Approach,” *Middle East Policy*, 15 no. 2 (Summer 2008), 111.

¹⁷⁸ “Saudi Time Bomb? Analysis: Wahhabism,” PBS Frontline, 15 November 2001, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/wahhabism.html>

ruling family derives much of its legitimacy and ruling power from Wahhabis, and they share an alliance, though it may be uneasy at times.¹⁷⁹ It does not help that some of the most notorious terrorist groups in the twenty-first century, including Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, were followers of Wahhabism.

For years, Wahhabism – and the Saudi government by extension – have exported extremism across the globe with little pushback. Any efforts to deradicalize their population, not to mention the populations of countries where Saudi Arabia has been instrumental in building the Muslim faith will require a reckoning with how to deal with Wahhabism and its ties to extremism. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has made overtures towards addressing this issue, including by “[reeling] in the kingdom’s once all-powerful religious police and locked up some extremist clerics.”¹⁸⁰

Another turning point may be the Belgian government’s decision to terminate Saudi Arabia’s 99-year rent-free lease of the Grand Mosque in Brussels after charges that it – and the Muslim World League that is funded by Saudi Arabia and which runs the Mosque – was promoting extremism.¹⁸¹ In a possible attempt to show that the Saudi government – and the foreign programs and charities it supports – is taking a step back from the strictest Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, the head of the Muslim World League, Mohammed al-Issa “has made a series of remarkable statements in what appears to be a sincere one-man campaign to promote moderation” that is “in direct contravention of decades of Wahhabi proselytizing.”¹⁸²

Whether these steps by the Saudi government are truly a sign that they are permanently taking a step back from the Wahhabi interpretation that is well-cited by Islamic extremists or if this is simply an effort to change the subject after from other bad press that the Kingdom has received in the past couple of years, including the ongoing war in Yemen and the killing of Jamal Khashoggi remains to be seen. However, there is little question that Saudi will be unable to have a sustained, successful deradicalization program until it deals with how their efforts are in basic opposition to the interpretation of Islam that they have spent

¹⁷⁹ Neil MacFarquhar, “A Nation Challenged: Teachings; Bin Laden and His Followers Adhere To an Austere, Stringent Form of Islam,” *New York Times*, 7 October 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/07/world/nation-challenged-teachings-bin-laden-his-followers-adhere-austere-stringent.html>

¹⁸⁰ Josh Hannah, “It’s Time for Saudi Arabia to Stop Exporting Extremism,” *Foreign Policy*, 3 May 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/03/its-time-for-saudi-arabia-to-stop-exporting-extremism/>.

¹⁸¹ Alissa de Carbonnel, “Belgium takes back Brussels’ Grand Mosque from Saudi government,” *Reuters*, 16 March 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-attacks-belgium/belgium-takes-back-brussels-grand-mosque-from-saudi-government-idUSKCN1GS2B3>

¹⁸² Hannah

decades spreading across the globe. Therefore, it is important to view their deradicalization efforts in this context.

Saudi Arabia's Deradicalization Program

Initially developed in secret “to foster its success away from media attention”¹⁸³, the Saudi counter-radicalization and deradicalization strategy is designed “to eliminate the intellectual support for Islamic extremism” by “reinforcing the traditional Saudi interpretation of Islam, which stresses obedience and loyalty to the state and its leadership.”¹⁸⁴ A key theme throughout Saudi counterterrorism policy, and specifically for its deradicalization program, is that terrorists prey upon “naïve individuals – including those who merely seek to become more pious”¹⁸⁵ and use their target’s lack of religious knowledge, education, and understanding to distort Islam into something that is supportive of terrorism.

The Saudi counter-radicalization and deradicalization program is known as the PRAC strategy – Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare.

Prevention

There are hundreds counter-radicalization programs that fall under the “prevention” banner across Saudi Arabia. Many of the programs are administered through the Ministry of Interior and are “designed to confront extremism through the promotion and propagation of a more judicious interpretation of religious doctrine.”¹⁸⁶

These programs are not dissimilar to the vast majority of Morocco’s counter-radicalization program, but they tend to be on a larger scale. Education is a key component to the prevention strategy. Within Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education “arranged lectures and programs” geared toward students of all ages that focused on the “dangers of extremism and the effects of terrorism and violence.”¹⁸⁷ The government also introduced more extensive training for teachers, especially in religious schools, and pressed schools to modernize their curriculum and textbooks.¹⁸⁸ To further remove the country’s vast network of religious

¹⁸³ Christopher Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” in *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and collective disengagement*, eds. Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 212.

¹⁸⁴ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 3.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸⁷ Mahmood-Ul-Hassan Khan, “Saudi Arabia’s Counter Terrorism Strategy,” *Defence Journal* 16, no. 10 (May 2013), 58.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 59.

schools from extremists hands, Saudi officials “prohibited... [imams] for incitement and talk of intolerance,” and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs now routinely monitors both mosques and religious schools to “purge extremism and intolerance” from their ranks.¹⁸⁹ Saudi schools have also created art competitions and contests “similar to American drug awareness of ‘drink milk’ campaigns” to encourage students to understand the effects of terrorism, as well as to promote nationalism.¹⁹⁰

The government has also taken steps to keep young men, the primary recruits of extremist groups, busy and out of the reach of radicals. As Saudi society had “experienced a scarcity of social outlets for young Saudis,” the government began sponsoring and funding activities like car and camel racing, sporting events and desert adventure trips to compete with the “summer camps and questionable religious retreats” organized by extremist groups.

Rehabilitation and the Counseling Program

The Counselling Program, known as *al-Munasahah*, was founded by then-Assistant Interior Minister Prince Muhammad bin Nayef (now the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and First Deputy Prime Minister) is geared toward prisoners who “sympathize with or provide support to extremists.”¹⁹¹ It is a key aspect in the rehabilitation process for the Saudi PRAC strategy. The Counseling Program is “based upon a presumption of benevolence, and not vengeance or retribution” and starts with the presumption that participants were “lied to and misled by extremists into straying away from true Islam.”¹⁹²

The Counseling Program is run by the Advisory Committee and has four subcommittees: the Religious Subcommittee; the Psychological and Social Subcommittee; the Security Subcommittee; and the Media Subcommittee.¹⁹³ The Psychological and Social subcommittee is comprised of around fifty psychologists, psychiatrists, social scientists, and researchers and is responsible for “diagnosing any psychological problems and assessing the prisoner’s behavior and compliance throughout the program.”¹⁹⁴ This Subcommittee is also responsible for evaluating whether their rehabilitation is genuine and determining what the prisoner, as well as his family, will need when or if he is released from custody, to prevent

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*

¹⁹⁰ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 9.

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, 18.

¹⁹² Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” 215.

¹⁹³ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 11.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid*, 12.

recidivism.¹⁹⁵ The Security Subcommittee is the most secretive and many parts of its mission are unknown; it is known to be primarily responsible for judging whether a prisoner poses a security risk if he is released. Finally, the Media Subcommittee is responsible for producing the materials used during the course.

Of all the Subcommittees, the Religious Subcommittee is the largest and the one that is involved in the direct engagement of prisoners; over one hundred and fifty scholars, clerics, and professors make up the Subcommittee.¹⁹⁶ Because Saudi Arabia is home to some of the most sacred sites in the faith, there are a large number of religious scholars available to participate on the Subcommittee, though the group is very cautious and selective on which scholars it chooses to invite to join.¹⁹⁷ Many of the respected Wahhabi scholars that participate in the program lend legitimacy to the program because “their traditional role within Saudi tribal villages” was to “give advice to young people who had fallen foul of the law.”¹⁹⁸

Communication style is key to a successful dialogue (and perhaps a successful deradicalization), so the religious experts on the Subcommittee are instructed not to lecture, but to engage in a dialogue; this is viewed as so important that qualified experts have been asked not to return to working with detainees when they were found lacking in this area.¹⁹⁹

It should be noted, however, that there is a concern that the ideological component, most closely tied to the Religious Subcommittee, could actually have long-term negative consequences for both the program and those that it seeks to help. Conservative Muslims, including many Saudis, “place certain conditions of participation in armed jihad... For instance, many scholars argue that the tactic is permissible on Muslim lands under occupation. Therefore, there is no outright condemnation of terrorism, only of the circumstances under which it is perpetrated.”²⁰⁰

Counseling Program

Members of the Advisory Committee who meeting with prisoners’ stress that they are not employed by the Interior Ministry or by any of Saudi Arabia’s security services, in order to create an open dialogue;²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁹⁶ Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” 217.

¹⁹⁷ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 12.

¹⁹⁸ Andreas Casptack, “Deradicalization Programs in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study,” *Middle East Institute*, 10 June 2015, http://www.mei.edu/content/deradicalization-programs-saudi-arabia-case-study#_ftn3.

¹⁹⁹ Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” 217-218.

²⁰⁰ Rabasa, 76.

²⁰¹ Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” 220.

instead, they state that they are “independent and righteous”²⁰² scholars. The first meeting between prisoner and religious expert are usually conducted one-on-one; Committee members are encouraged to listen to ask the prisoner “what they did, why they did it, and the circumstances that brought them to be in prison.”²⁰³ During the rehabilitation process, the scholars discuss the various facets of the prisoners’ beliefs and attempt to show them that they have been given a corrupt interpretation;²⁰⁴ while some prisoners disavow their beliefs in only one session, many times it takes longer. Understanding this, the Advisory Committee runs two separate programs: one that involves short sessions of about two hours each that detainees the more open detainees can attend, as well as a longer six-week group study session that is led by two clerics that covers ten separate topics such as *takfir*, *walaah*, and *bay’ah*.²⁰⁵ Unlike with the short sessions, the six-week study programs requires detainees to take and pass a test before they can move onto the next phase of the deradicalization process; those who do not pass must take the test again.²⁰⁶

Aftercare

When prisoners have completed one of the counseling programs and been judged suitably deradicalized and able to join society, they are put into one of the aftercare programs run by the Ministry of Interior. Among the programs supported by the aftercare portion of the PRAC strategy are “a halfway house program for detainees to ease their release into society; programs to reintegrate returnees from Guantánamo Bay; and policies to help keep released detainees from committing new offenses.”²⁰⁷ While there are several different paths that can be taken by a newly released prisoner after his rehabilitation, a constant is the presence and importance of family and community. To ensure that prisoners have a smooth reintegration into society, families are encouraged to visit regularly²⁰⁸ to demonstrate their support for denouncing extremist ideology. Recently, the family members have become an integral part of designing a “specialized program” for the detainee to whom they are related.²⁰⁹

²⁰² *ibid*

²⁰³ *ibid*, 221.

²⁰⁴ *ibid*

²⁰⁵ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 17.

²⁰⁶ Boucek, “Extremist re-education and rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia,” 222.

²⁰⁷ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 17.

²⁰⁸ Jessica Stern, “Deradicalization or Disengagement of Terrorists: Is It Possible?” Koret-Taube Task Force on National Security and Law at the Hoover Institution, 2010, 6, http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/futurechallenges_stern.pdf.

²⁰⁹ Marisa L. Porges, “The Saudi Deradicalization Experiment,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 22 January 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/radicalization-and-extremism/saudi-deradicalization-experiment/p21292>.

The most common step for prisoners who have been rehabilitated is to be transferred to the Care Rehabilitation Center in Riyadh. The Center, which appears much more like a college than a traditional prison, offers residents the opportunity to mingle, play sports like soccer, and prepare group meals. Residents are told before they enter exactly how long they will be required to stay, with most spending between eight and twelve weeks.²¹⁰ The Center also offers religious education that is a continuation of what was offered in prison to reinforce the message that true interpretations of Islam don't advocate violence. Additionally, residents receive vocational training to prepare them to reenter society as a productive member and help to ensure that a recently-released prisoner does not find himself with too much time on his hands and drawn back into extremism.²¹¹

The offerings and set-up at the Center are regarded as integral parts of the counter-radicalization and deradicalization process "because they not only build teamwork but also encourage acceptance and develop notions of inclusion."²¹² Although not a traditional prison, residents of the Care Rehabilitation Center are still confined to the grounds, but have the opportunity to both call and visit with family and may even be granted opportunities to temporarily stay with family members.²¹³ These "trial releases" allow staff at the Center to "observe how each party responds to the other, assess the individual undergoing rehabilitation, and determine whether family members will be capable of supervising him after release."²¹⁴

When residents have completed their stay at the Care Rehabilitation Center, they are given assistance in securing a job, a car, and an apartment. The Advisory Committee has also set up programs in conjunction with "local chambers of commerce and other certification organizations to establish training courses," which allow participants to learn skills that can lead to better employment upon their release.²¹⁵ For residents that do not have families, the Saudi government also provides assistance in "finding wives... pay[ing] for the wedding, [and] the dowry"²¹⁶ for any expressing interest, as it is understood that family responsibilities²¹⁷ will make an offender less likely to reoffend.

²¹⁰ Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy," 18.

²¹¹ Wagdy Loza, "The Need for Effective Intervention Programs to Prevent Islamic Extremists and Terrorist Recruitment in Western Countries with Special Emphasis on Canada, *The Mackenzie Institute*, 2 February 2015, <http://mackenzieinstitute.com/need-effective-intervention-programs-prevent-islamic-extremists-terrorist-recruitment-western-countries-special-emphasis-canada/>.

²¹² Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy," 18.

²¹³ *ibid*

²¹⁴ Porges

²¹⁵ Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy," 20.

²¹⁶ Capstack

²¹⁷ Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy," 20.

Although the program initially included very little formal follow-up for participants, several high profile incidents of “rehabilitated” terrorists returning to their previous ideology and misdeeds has led to a change. Now, “ongoing documented evaluations and regular assessments by staff members” are required.²¹⁸ Released participants are also encouraged to reach out to the scholars with whom they met to continue their dialogue on Islam.²¹⁹

Gauging the Effectiveness of the Program

Unlike with Morocco, where much of the counter-radicalization program is intangible, and thus hard to judge on its success, Saudi Arabia’s deradicalization program has statistics that can be studied. Initial reports painted the program, which Saudi officials judge by its recidivism rate, with an impossible-to-believe one hundred percent success rate.²²⁰ As late as 2007, Sheikh Al-Sadlan, who served as a religious scholar for the Counseling Program, “announced that ninety percent of prisoners who had been through the program had recanted their deviant views”, while another member of the Counseling Program, Muhammad Al-Nujimi said that “only nine of the 700 [prisoners] released, following the announcement of their rejection of radical and deviant views have returned to their previous ideologies.”²²¹ However, as the program has continued, those numbers have been proven to be far less eye-catching than reported.

In 2009, it was released that at least eleven participants who were involved in the deradicalization program after their return from Guantánamo Bay had returned to a life of terrorism and extremist ideology.²²² The most notable of these is Said al-Shihiri, who was judged to have successfully completed the deradicalization program but then “proceeded to become deputy lead of al-Qaeda in Yemen, orchestrating the bombing on the American embassy in Sana’a in 2008.”²²³ Faced with new evidence, Saudi authorities revised their estimated failure rate to between ten and twenty percent, which includes “detainees who refused to participate in the program, as well as those who failed the rehabilitation program.”²²⁴ In 2014, the spokesman for the Interior Ministry, Maj. Gen. Mansour Al-Turki said that twelve percent of

²¹⁸ Porges

²¹⁹ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 20.

²²⁰ Porges

²²¹ Ansary, 121.

²²² Porges

²²³ Capstack

²²⁴ Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s ‘Soft’ Counterterrorism Strategy,” 21.

participants in the deradicalization program had “relapsed and returned to terror-related activities.”²²⁵ When interviewed by the *New York Times* in April of 2016, officials could not provide statistics for the success rate of the program, only stating that “recidivism is low.”²²⁶ Ultimately, a considerable part of the problem with judging the effectiveness of the deradicalization program is the dependence on official statistics provided by the Saudi government with no way to independently verify them.

Judging the exact effectiveness of the deradicalization portion of the Saudi PRAC strategy will continue to be complex because deradicalization should be judged over the long-term. Since the program has only been in existence for about a decade, and jihadist activity in the region continues to grow, it is nearly impossible to determine if those who have been classified as success stories will continue to be that way in the future. Additionally, it is also important to judge the strategy as a whole, which includes the success of the counter-radicalization efforts, which in the case of Saudi Arabia (and many other countries) are geared towards young people. To do this, it is important to examine the outflux of Saudi nationals to conflict zones.

Both official and non-official tallies indicate that there were around 2500 foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia in Syria and Iraq in October 2015. When looking at Saudi Arabia’s percentage of fighters for every one million citizens, they rank in the National Bureau of Economic Research’s top ten with 80.9 fighters for every one million citizens, behind Kyrgyzstan (86.2 fighters/one million citizens) and in front of Macedonia (69.5 fighters/one million citizens).²²⁷ However, when examining the statistics based solely on Muslim population, Saudi Arabia tumbles down the National Bureau of Economic Research’s list. With 83.3 fighters for every Muslim citizen, Saudi Arabia ranks thirty-second, behind Kyrgyzstan (97.1 fighters/one million Muslims) and before Turkmenistan (72.8 fighters/one million Muslims).²²⁸

Conclusion

Both Morocco and Saudi Arabia have comprehensive countering violent extremism strategies that include, to varying degrees, deradicalization programs. Each shows signs of success, with Morocco minimizing the

²²⁵ “12% of rehab terrorists relapse,” *Arab News*, 28 November 2014, <http://www.arabnews.com/featured/news/666656>.

²²⁶ Ben Hubbard, “Inside Saudi Arabia’s Re-education Prison for Jihadists,” *The New York Times*, 9 April 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/10/world/middleeast/inside-saudi-arabias-re-education-prison-for-jihadists.html>

²²⁷ Benmelech and Klor, 19.

²²⁸ Benmelech and Klor, 20.

terrorist incidents within its borders, and Saudi Arabia reporting deradicalization success rates of between eighty and ninety percent, to date. While these are positive markers, the evidence simply isn't there that these programs have the ability to sustain positive correlations over time, partially due to the relatively small samples that they have been in existence. When examining the complete abandonment of an ideology, countries must verify that it is sustainable; a counter-radicalization or deradicalization program is not effective if the teachings only hold for years, not the lifetime of the participant.

The relationship that varying interpretations of Islam have on deradicalization and counter-radicalization programs is also an important feature for the programs in both Morocco and Saudi Arabia. Because Morocco has an extensive history of supporting a moderate form of Islam, and has reinvested in these efforts, they are able to highlight religious education as a part of their counter-radicalization strategy without having to worry about dissident voices from within the government pushing an interpretation more favorable to extremism. Saudi Arabia, however, has to reckon with decades of spreading its extremist-friendly version of Wahhabism that lends itself to be used by terrorist groups around the globe. They have less credibility in pushing a moderate version of Islam, and their attempts to deradicalize individuals is likely going to be hampered by this. Additionally, because they have prioritized the spread of their conservative brand of Islam around the globe, the Saudi government will have to determine how they can support deradicalization efforts in those places, as well.

Therefore, while, counter-radicalization and deradicalization programs have the potential to be a key asset in fighting terrorism and the ideology that stokes it, there is simply not enough information at this time to determine if these programs will be effective in the long-term. Nevertheless, countries in the Middle East and North Africa are not the only ones that have thrown attention and money into these programs in the hope that they will address the terrorist threats facing them. Specifically, as Western nations devote additional resources to the nebulous act of "fighting terrorism," there is clearly an interest in determining whether potential terrorists can be dissuaded from committing terrorist acts and perhaps walking away from extremism altogether.

Deradicalization Programs as a Tool to Fight Extremism: Comparing Programs in the
United Kingdom and the United States

Like in the Middle East and North Africa, many Western nations have decided that deradicalization programs will serve as part of a broader counterterrorism effort. This chapter examines two Western approaches to deradicalization, one in the United Kingdom and the other in the U.S. There are clear and obvious differences between the programs that can be traced to their origins, the support they receive from the central government, and what the legal requirements of such programs are. This paper also examines whether the programs can be deemed a success. Each case study, beginning with the UK, will walk through the origins of the deradicalization program; the demographics of the targeted population; the main components of the program; and an evaluation of its successes or failures.

Although there are marked differences between the comprehensive nature of the UK program and the program in the U.S., a subset of the UK's *Prevent* program, referred to as a "strand," has a number of similarities to the program found in the U.S. and it is unsurprising that the creators of the U.S. program sought out advice and training from British officials. Additionally, the programs in the UK and the U.S. suffer from the same lack of transparency and data that leads to challenges in evaluating their presumed effectiveness – though each has had high-profile failures.

Deradicalization in the UK- CONTEST

The attacks in the U.S. on September 11, 2001 were the catalysts for countries across the globe to reconsider their plans to prevent similar attacks on their domestic populations and infrastructure, and the United Kingdom was no different. Though the UK had, for several decades, dealt with terrorist threats related to Northern Ireland and The Troubles, the terrorist attacks on the U.S. brought a shift in focus to terrorist threats related to jihadists, rather than being predicated on an ongoing, internal religious and political struggle. The UK's initial review, which was billed as comprehensive, "was an attempt to coordinate the pan-Governmental response to the emerging [jihadi] terrorist threat" called CONTEST.²²⁹ While the initial attempt was meant to serve as a coordination point for the entirety of the British government, the program lacked details and was only comprehensive in the most generous interpretation of the word. CONTEST relied on four "strands" – some with more detail and attention than others – to make

²²⁹ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *Protect CONTEST: The Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, Ninth Report of Session 2008-2009, London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2009.
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/212/212.pdf>

up the bulk of this strategy: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare, as detailed below in Figure 8.

CONTEST STRANDS (FIGURE 8)²³⁰

Pursue	Prepare	Protect	Prevent
• To stop terrorist attacks	• Mitigate the impacts of a terrorist attack if one cannot be prevented	• Strengthen overall protections against terrorism	• Stop individuals from supporting or joining terrorist groups

It wasn't until the terrorist attacks in London on July 7, 2005 (colloquially called the 7/7 attacks) that the need for such a program truly hit home for those that worked in counterterrorism in the UK, and many of the ideas behind CONTEST were fleshed out to an extent to make them useful.

July 7 Terrorist Attacks and Homegrown Terrorism

An important differentiating factor in the 7/7 attacks from their predecessors in the U.S. – and a vital point to understanding the reinvention of CONTEST – were the very perpetrators of the attacks. The hijackers during the September 11th attacks were all foreign nationals who had lived in the U.S. for only a brief time before the attack. In no way could these individuals be thought of as “homegrown” or part of the American domestic fabric. The 7/7 attackers, however, had all spent their formative years in Britain, and were described as “educated, well integrated, not particularly devout, family men”²³¹ – typically characteristics that would point to being at a lower risk for radicalization – who had, at some point, become radicalized while living in the UK. Although some of the group had traveled to terrorist hotspots in Afghanistan and Pakistan to train with known terrorist networks, their radicalization unquestionably occurred on British soil.

With this new focus on homegrown terrorism and radicalization, the Prevent strand of CONTEST became increasingly more important. While the government could monitor foreign nationals coming in and out of the country, there were obstacles to monitoring domestic populations that required cooperation from populations that viewed the government with suspicion and had often been on the outside of British society. In many ways, the substantive challenges that the government faced were not dissimilar to terrorism faced

²³⁰ HM Government, *The Prevent Strategy: A Guide for Local Partners in England: Stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists*, London: Department for Education, May 2008. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121004145409/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Prevent_Strategy.pdf

²³¹ Akil Awan, “The 7/7 attacks and a new type of terrorism,” *New Internationalist*, July 7 2015 <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/07/07/7-7-attacks-terrorism-london>

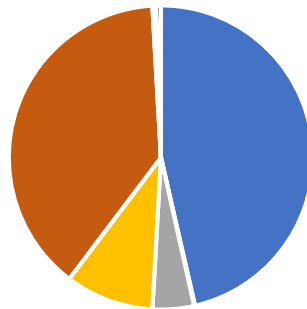
during The Troubles, but were layered with sensitive issues involving assimilation, culture, and race.

The Muslim Population in the UK

As the UK conducts a national census every ten years, the last official data set available on the Muslim

**Country of Birth of Muslim Population
(Figure 9)**

- United Kingdom
- Republic of Ireland
- Other Europe
- Africa
- Middle East & Asia
- The Americas & the Caribbean
- Other



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011. ONS TABLE DC2207EW

population dates to 2011. According to this data there are 3,372,966 Muslims living in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales)²³² with an additional 3,800 living in Northern Ireland²³³. In total, there are more Muslims living in the UK than all other non-Christian groups combined, and the Muslim population in England and Wales grew by more than 1.16 million Muslims between 2001 and 2011.²³⁴ The last decade, which has seen a marked increase in asylum seekers and other immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, has likely led to

an increase in the Muslim population of the UK. The Pew Research Center estimates that the Muslim population grew to around 4.13 million people – around 6.3% of the country's entire population – by 2016.²³⁵ Without more detailed information on those new arrivals – which likely won't be available until the next census – we are dependent on the 2011 data to better understand this population set. One of the key variables that likely will change with the influx of immigrants is the percentage of British-born Muslims, which in 2011 was calculated at 46.4 percent, as demonstrated by Figure 9. Muslims from the Middle East and Asia were the second largest group, accounting for 38.8 percent of the Muslim population in the UK. However, even with an influx of new arrivals, many of the demographic trends found in the 2011 census are likely to continue.

²³² Office for National Statistics, "Muslim Population in the UK," 2 August 2018,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/muslimpopulationintheuk/>

²³³ Sundas Ali, "British Muslims in Numbers." The Muslim Council of Britain, January 2015. http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf, 12.

²³⁴ *ibid*

²³⁵ "Europe's Growing Muslim Population," Pew Research Center, 29 November 2017, <https://www.pewforum.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/11/FULL-REPORT-FOR-WEB-POSTING.pdf>, 4.

Overall, the Muslim population was considerably younger than the overall British population in 2011, as seen in Figure 10. The median age for Muslims living in the UK is 25, while the overall population's median age is 40; additionally, 33 percent of the Muslim population was 15 years or younger in 2011, compared to 19 percent of the overall British

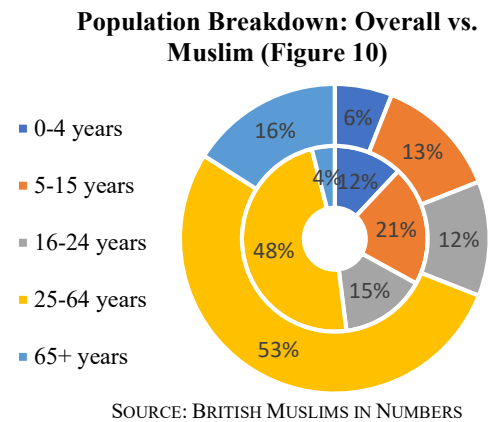
population.²³⁶ By itself, age cannot be considered a risk factor for radicalization. However, when combined with other factors like unemployment – Muslims have an unemployment rate nearly double when compared to the overall unemployment rate, 7.2 percent vs. 4.0 percent²³⁷ – and incarceration rate, with the Muslim prison population accounting for almost triple their proportionate

population rate (as of July 2013, Muslims made up 13 percent of the prison population and only 4.8 percent of the UK's overall population)²³⁸, the large youth population could indicate a fertile ground for both radicalization and deradicalization.

The Muslim population across the UK is extremely diverse, as seen in Figure 11. Due to their past colonial relationship, it makes sense that the single largest ethnic group represented is Pakistani. However, with the influx in immigrants and refugees from Syria, Iraq, and across Africa, the next batch of census data will likely reflect a shift and growth in those subcategories.

Proportionally, when comparing the different demographic groups of Muslims, there are some striking similarities when looking at those arrested for terrorism-related offenses. Between 2001 and 2016, 40 percent of those arrested were reported as being of Asian appearance – it is important to note that the “ethnicity of a suspect is based upon the observation of a police officer at the time of arrest or charge” – and 41 percent of all those arrested for terrorism in 2017 were reported as Asian.²³⁹

Interestingly, when looking at the terrorism-related arrests by country since 2001, the vast majority were British citizens (2,219) with the next most frequent being Algerian (173), Pakistani (158), Iraqi (146), and



²³⁶ Ali, 16.

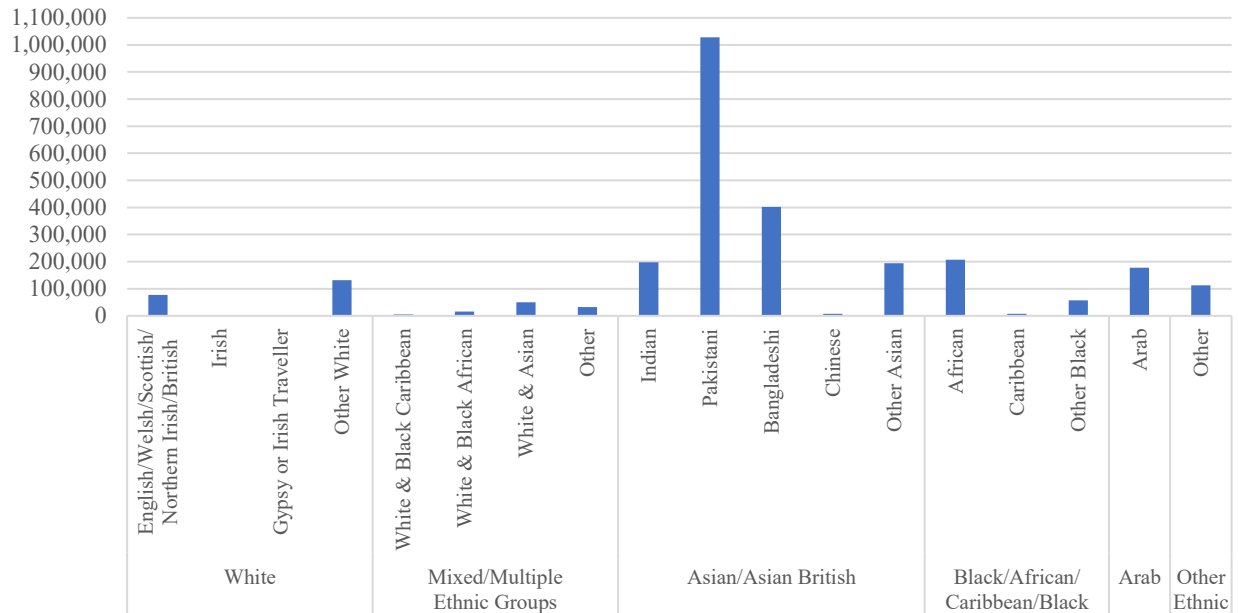
²³⁷ *ibid.*, 58.

²³⁸ *ibid.*, 42.

²³⁹ Grahame Allen and Noel Dempsey, “Terrorism in Great Britain: the statistics,” House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, 7 June 2018, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7613/CBP-7613.pdf>. 15.

Afghani (85).²⁴⁰ There does not appear to be a relationship between the size of individual ethnic Muslim communities in the UK with the likelihood of an individual being arrested for a terrorism offense.

MUSLIM POPULATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES BY ETHNIC GROUP (FIGURE 11)



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011. ONS TABLE DC2201EW

Where there appears to be a connection, however, is within the community of converts to Islam.

Unfortunately, there is limited statistical information on the number of converts across the UK, with the most recent substantive research done on the subject dating back to 2010's Swansea University report done on behalf of the inter-faith group Faith Matters. That report that around 5,200 individuals converted to Islam in 2010, and in total, there were around 100,000 Muslim converts across the UK by 2010.²⁴¹

Although these converts account for less than 4 percent of all Muslims in the UK, they account for 12 percent of home-grown jihadis.²⁴²

The Prevent Strand

For the purpose of this paper, we will set aside the three strands in CONTEST that are directly related to

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 17.

²⁴¹ M.A. Kevin Brice, "A Minority within a Minority: A Report on Converts to Islam in the UK," Swansea University on behalf of Faith Matters, 2010, <https://www.faith-matters.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/a-minority-within-a-minority-a-report-on-converts-to-islam-in-the-uk.pdf>, 9-11.

²⁴² "Converts to Islam are likelier to radicalise than native Muslims," *The Economist*, 1 April 2017, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2017/04/01/converts-to-islam-are-likelier-to-radicalise-than-native-muslims>

terrorist attacks themselves, either attempting to stop them or to mitigate their impact and focusing on the portion of the program that deals directly with radicalization and deradicalization: *Prevent*. The program has gone through a number of changes in the decade and a half it has officially been a part of the UK counterterrorism plans; as the party in charge of Parliament has shifted, both the tone and focus of the strand has also shifted. I will examine some of these shifts later in this section, as part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

It is important to note that *Prevent* deals not just with deradicalization but also attempts to prevent radicalization in the first place. *Prevent*, specifically, has three key objectives: (1) “respond[ing] to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it” (2) “prevent[ing] people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support” and (3) “work[ing] with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.”²⁴³ While the components of *Prevent* that deal with interventions with at risk populations before they are exposed to extremism, or before they express interest in extremism, are vital components, for the purpose of this examination are not necessarily as important. Because, of course, if you address at-risk individuals before they have been radicalized, there is no need to deradicalize them. Thus, the first and third objectives are most important for this purpose. Although there are other programs that deal with some components of these objectives, the *Channel* program forms the core of the deradicalization programs with *CONTEST* and *Prevent*.

Understanding Channel

Perhaps more than any other portion of *CONTEST*, *Channel* has served as a lightning rod for a host of reasons, including concerns about effectiveness, racial profiling, and misunderstandings for what the program seeks to do. Therefore, in order to judge whether this program is particularly effective, it is important to understand who it targets and how it works. Although *Prevent* has been a part of *CONTEST* since the beginning, *Channel* did not rolled out as a pilot program until 2007 and did not cover the entirety of England and Wales until 2012.²⁴⁴ Interestingly, although the program is ostensibly “run” by the

²⁴³ Home Department, HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, June 2011, London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2011. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf.

²⁴⁴ HM Government, *Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism, Statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels*, London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2015.

UK government, the vast majority of power and decision-making is delegated to local authorities.

Referrals, which are discussed a bit later, are sent to Channel panels made up of local officials and can include representatives from a wide variety of organizations including social workers, Home Office Immigration, prisons and probationary officials, schools, and NHS.²⁴⁵ Depending on the age of the person being referred, specialized groups like Troubled Families Teams and Local Safeguarding Children or Adult Boards may also participate.

Once a person is identified as possibly being at risk, they are evaluated based on three criteria:

“engagement with a group, cause or ideology; intent to cause harm; and capability to cause harm” that are then further broken down into twenty-two factors.²⁴⁶ Each of the three criteria has factors that are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For example, when considering engagement, the program looks at things like “changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group” and “loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;” intention factors include “expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group” or “speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group;” and capability includes “having occupational skills that enable acts of terrorism” or “having a history of violence.”²⁴⁷ Like many checklist-type evaluations, being involved in one of these activities or engaging in one or more of these behaviors does not necessarily mean a person would become involved in extremist behavior, but the presence of multiple factors would indicate an increased likelihood of their participation.

Once the Channel Panel determines that a person presents a significant risk, an individualized plan is developed for them. While some plans may emphasize traditional ideological reprogramming, they will usually also include “assistance with education or employment, [and] health support.”²⁴⁸ However, before being enrolled in such a plan, the individual “must be made aware that they are receiving this as part of a programme to protect people from being drawn into terrorism; what the aims of the process are; and what

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 7.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 11.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 12.

²⁴⁸ UK Home Office, “A Case Study: The Channel Programme,” 13 December 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/the-channel-programme>.

to expect.”²⁴⁹ While enrolled in a Channel program, a participant is routinely monitored and their progress during the course is evaluated – and those exiting any Channel or programs that they have been subsequently referred to – are given mandatory six- and twelve-month evaluations.²⁵⁰

Challenges of Channel

One of the keys to understanding the efficacy of Channel is that it is almost completely reliant on referrals from local officials – whether they be law enforcement, social services, or other community members.

While this can allow for a “see something, say something” early intervention, it also has the potential to fall victim to bias, stereotypes, and profiling. Although referrals are supposed to be evaluated for the “3 Ms” – being misinformed, malicious, or misguided – before they are continued into the program, critics of the program say that many fall into these categories that are allowed to proceed.²⁵¹ Additionally, members of the community that are found to have made referrals that fall into these categories face no consequences.

A change in law in 2015 further cemented some of these concerns. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 added language that required some public organizations, like schools, the police, and NHS, to prevent people from “being drawn into terrorism.”²⁵² In the explanation of the legislation, admitted that the cooperation required for the program to be successful was “not consistent across Great Britain” and by making it a legal requirement for some groups to report potentially problematic behavior it would “improve the standard of work.”²⁵³ However, turning these groups into mandatory reporters also increased the likelihood that they would make reports that fell into one of the 3Ms, at least partly out of fear that if they did not report borderline suspicious behavior of individuals they could find themselves in legal jeopardy.

Perhaps one of the most significant problems with Channel, however, is a problem that has befallen not only a number of deradicalization programs, but general counterterrorism strategies: a close relationship – or reliance – on law enforcement. Although it seems a natural fit that law enforcement officials should be

²⁴⁹ *Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism, Statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels*, 16.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 18.

²⁵¹ Talene Bilazarian, “Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons on Early Intervention from the United Kingdom’s Channel Program,” George Washington University Program on Extremism, October 2016, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/Channel%20CVE%20UK.pdf>, 5.

²⁵² Parliament of the United Kingdom, *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015*, London: The Stationery Office, 2015, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/pdfs/ukpga_20150006_en.pdf#page24.

²⁵³ Parliament of the United Kingdom, *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 Explanatory Notes*, London: The Stationery Office, 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/notes>

involved with individuals that have shown a propensity or willingness to commit terrorist attacks, it can also breed suspicion for the surrounding community and religious leaders whose participation is necessary for these types of programs to work. Muslim groups in the UK who have been critical of Channel have repeatedly stated that the programs are “more concerned with gathering intelligence than supporting communities.”²⁵⁴ Some have gone farther, describing Prevent – and by extension Channel – as “tainted” and “toxic,” causing Muslim communities to “feel isolated” and lead to an increased chance of radicalization.²⁵⁵ Thus, the program meant to aid those at the most risk and to deradicalize the population may actually be having the opposite effect – a truly troubling supposition.

Channel By the Numbers: Success, Failure, or Somewhere in Between

Receiving significant pressure from both vocal supporters and opponents of the program, the British government has become more transparent in the data that it shares about precisely who is involved in the Channel program. And the numbers and demographic data provide an interesting picture of the program. The most recent data released from the UK government covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018. Perhaps problematically, the data indicates that while there is some monitoring of individuals that have completed the program – with few indications that they have returned to terrorist ideology – some individuals leave without completing the program.^{256,257} As enrollment in the program is voluntary, there is legal difficulty in monitoring these individuals, which may be at serious risk to fall back in with extremist groups. The data shows a marked consistency on the number of subjects that have withdrawn from the program, which would seem to negate arguments that the Channel programme has become so toxic to minority communities, as some privacy groups have argued, that it is no longer an effective tool because large segments of the at-risk population will refuse to participate.

²⁵⁴ Jamie Grierson and Vikram Dodd, “Prevent strategy on radicalization faces independent review,” *The Guardian*, 22 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/22/prevent-strategy-on-radicalisation-faces-independent-review>.

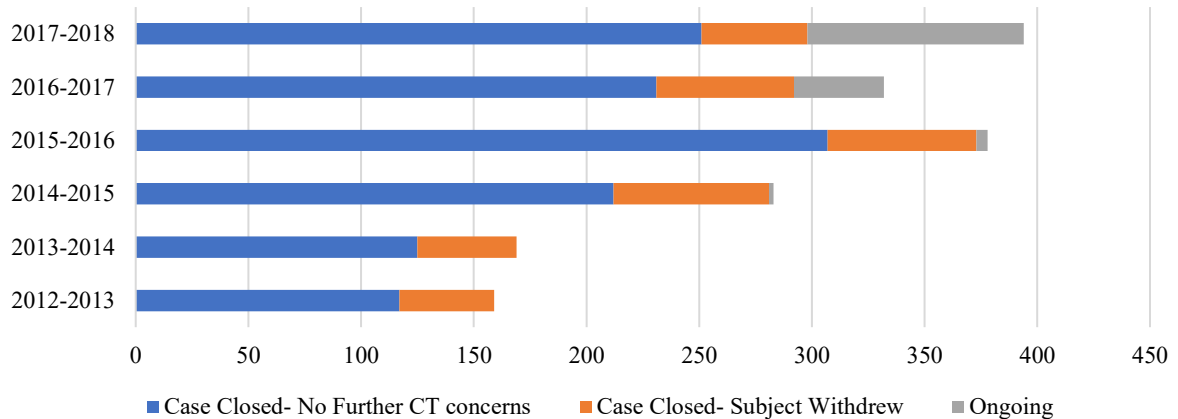
²⁵⁵ “Reality Check: What is the Prevent strategy?” *BBC News*, 4 June 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2017-40151991>.

²⁵⁶ Home Office, “Individuals Referred to an Supported through Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018; Annex B: Previous Channel data, April 2012 to March 2017,” 13 December 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763163/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2012-mar2017-annexb-tables.ods

²⁵⁷ Home Office, “Individuals Referred to an Supported through Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018; Annex A: Prevent statistics, April 2017 to March 2018,” 13 December 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763162/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2017-mar2018-annexa-tables.ods

Outcomes of Individuals Who Received Channel Support by UK Financial Year* (Figure 12)

*The UK Financial Year runs from April 1 - March 31



SOURCE: HOME OFFICE DATA ON PREVENT PROGRAMME, APRIL 2017-MARCH 2018, ANNEX A & B

However, the data also indicates that there has been significant growth in the number of cases that are considered “ongoing;” there was 140 percent growth between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, as demonstrated in Figure 12 above.²⁵⁸ Attempts to preserve the privacy of those participating in Channel restrict the ability to interpret that growth. It is unclear if the significant growth in the “ongoing” classification is due to monitoring of individuals to see if they are candidates for the program; participants staying in the program for longer than in past years; or some other factor. The government’s review of the Channel programme this year may lead to more clarity on this issue.

Among the individuals refusing to engage through Channel was Naa'imur Zakariyah Rahman, who had plotted to bomb Downing Street before beheading British Prime Minister Theresa May and then committing suicide. According to British officials, they had repeatedly attempted to engage Rahman after he was brought to the attention of the Channel programme when he was 18 years old out of fears that he was vulnerable to radicalization by family members, including an uncle who would join ISIS.²⁵⁹ Rahman was “unwilling” to participate in the process and “by the time he came to the attention of the counter terrorism network for his terrorist plans, he had disengaged from the process completely.”²⁶⁰ Although the

²⁵⁸ *ibid*

²⁵⁹ Lizzie Dearden, “Isis fanatic who planned to bomb Downing Street and behead Theresa May convicted,” *The Independent*, 18 July 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/downing-street-terror-plot-theresa-may-behead-rahman-imran-prevent-isis-a8453391.html>.

²⁶⁰ *ibid*

process worked as it should with Rahman – he was clearly identified as being either at risk of radicalization or having already been radicalized, and officials had attempted to engage him in the program – it shows a clear vulnerability when participation is not mandatory for those categorized as a threat.

The program has had a number of high-profile failures. On September 15, 2017, Ahmed Hassan bombed a train at the Parsons Green Underground station, which injured thirty-eight people. He had been referred to the Channel programme, and a panel had met nine times from June 2016 to September 5, 2017; however, “no violent ideology was confirmed,” and they were in the process of closing his case when he performed his act of terrorism.²⁶¹ The British Home Office said that the failure of Channel was due to the panel failing to “follow guidance on record-keeping, the frequency of vulnerability assessments, and intelligence updates.”²⁶²

A New Addition to Prevent: The Distance and Disengagement Programme (DDP)

The vast majority of the public’s understanding of the UK’s deradicalization program comes through Channel; however, with the government’s retooling of the counterterrorism strategy in June 2018, another program, also part of *Prevent*, gained attention. The *Distance and Disengagement Programme* had been run as a pilot program since October 2016²⁶³ but in the 2018 *Contest* update, British officials announced that they would expand it “over the next 12 months to more than double the number of individuals receiving rehabilitative interventions”²⁶⁴ with “capacity to accommodate up to 230 individuals.”²⁶⁵ Until this announcement, the government had not released any information on the program, including how many had been enrolled and who those people were. In fact, specific numbers on the program were not released until early April 2019 when a Freedom of Information request from the Henry Jackson Society revealed that 30 individuals had been a part of DDP during financial year 2016-2017, and 86 had participated in 2017-

²⁶¹ Lizzie Dearden, “Anti-terror officials discussed closing Parsons Green attacker’s case 10 days before Tube bombing,” *The Independent*, 18 June 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/parsons-green-tube-bombing-close-station-london-underground-prevent-isis-a8404736.html>.

²⁶² *ibid*

²⁶³ Fiona Hamilton and Richard Ford, “Hate preacher Anjem Choudary must go on anti-extremism course,” 29 October 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/anjem-choudary-must-go-on-anti-extremism-course-qglq7k86d>.

²⁶⁴ HM Government, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism*. June 2018. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/716907/140618_CCS207_CCS02_18929798-1_CONTEST_3.0_WEB.pdf. 33.

²⁶⁵ *ibid*, 40.

2018.²⁶⁶ Unlike Channel, which is voluntary, DDP is required for “returnees from conflict zones in Syria or Iraq who are subject to a temporary exclusion order (TEO), which makes it unlawful for an individual to return to the UK without engagement with the authorities” as well as those people who are “subject to terrorism prevention and investigation measures (Tpims).”²⁶⁷

Even with the release of basic participation numbers, DDP remains a mystery in many aspects. The government’s explanation of the program only describes it in the vaguest terms, which could be used to describe virtually any deradicalization program. DDP, *Contest* details, “provide[s] a range of intensive tailored interventions and practical support, designed to tackle the drivers of radicalisation around universal needs for identity, self-esteem, meaning and purpose; as well as to address personal grievances that the extremist narrative has exacerbated. Support could include mentoring, psychological support, theological and ideological advice.”²⁶⁸

The success or failure of the program is also shrouded in secrecy. With the government closely guarding the number of people who even participated in the program, they have clearly refused to release information on who, specifically, those individuals are, and if the government considers their involvement with DDP to be a success. We are left to guess that the program saw at least initial success because the government decided to expand it from a pilot program and double the number of participants. However, the identity of some of those required to participate calls into question how likely they are to participate completely – or truthfully. Women, often called “ISIS brides,” who are seeking to return to the UK with their children now that the terrorist group is considered mostly defeated, are required to join DDP. As Nikita Malik, the head of the Centre on Radicalisation and Terrorism at the Henry Jackson Society notes, these women are incentivized to lie “because the [DDP participation] notes are shared with the judges who then determine how often they can see their child.”²⁶⁹

With the British government’s reticence to share detailed information on the program or its participants, it

²⁶⁶ “Terrorists undergoing compulsory deradicalization course triples in UK,” *The Economic Times*, 06 April 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/terrorists-undergoing-compulsory-deradicalisation-course-triples-in-uk/articleshow/68753590.cms>.

²⁶⁷ Jamie Grierson, “Extremists living in UK under secretive counter-terror programme,” *The Guardian*, 5 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/apr/05/extremists-living-in-uk-under-secretive-counter-terror-programme>

²⁶⁸ HM Government, *CONTEST*, 40.

²⁶⁹ “Shamima Begum case: How do you deradicalise someone?” *BBC News*, 21 February 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-47289562>

is virtually impossible to judge whether it is – or will be – successful. The Distance and Disengagement Programme would seem, though, to have some red flags indicating vulnerabilities to being judged a failure. Looking strictly at the forced participation of individuals looking to repatriate themselves (and their children) back to the UK, these individuals have shown no indication that they are interested in turning away from their jihadist ideologies. Rather, they’ve found themselves without a home and are looking to return to a country they previously left. Interviews with many of these individuals – the most high profile of these being Shamima Begum – there is clearly a lack of remorse or understanding that their actions were wrong. While some may undergo a transformation by participating in DDP, there are likely to be spectacular failures, as well. It is too early to judge their participation in the program. However, as DDP grows, the publicly available information is likely to also increase, allowing for better evaluation.

Deradicalization Programs in the U.S.

The U.S., unlike the United Kingdom, does not have a comprehensive, country-wide deradicalization programs or even a pathway to implement them. Part of that may stem from the larger CVE effort being divided amongst multiple agencies and departments with little to no coordination and no one truly “owning” the responsibility for development, implementation, success, and failure. For example, the most updated policy explanations and strategic implementation plans²⁷⁰ date back to 2016, not precisely a long time ago in years, but importantly occurring during the previous presidential administration. While it is possible that there has been no change in philosophy for Countering Violent Extremism under President Trump, it seems highly unlikely based upon the significant policy changes he has made in almost every other arena related to terrorism and national security.

While the Department of Homeland Security has jurisdiction over many of these programs, the Department of Defense, Department of Justice, and Department of State also play key roles.²⁷¹ However, there is no inter-agency task force, no special “czar,” no stakeholder board that seeks to address the issue, as is often the case for issues deemed a crisis – or even those that are just pet issues for those in power. Although there is often a preoccupation with terrorism and radicalization, and no shortage of breathless media coverage

²⁷⁰ Executive Office of the President of the United States, “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,” October 2016, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2016_strategic_implementation_plan_empowering_local_partners_prev.pdf.

²⁷¹ Department of Homeland Security, “Countering Violent Extremism Task Force,” <https://www.dhs.gov/cve/what-is-cve>

when an American joins a terrorist group like the Islamic State, there is little focus beyond the “punishment” stage. For example, when Jaelyn Young, a student at Mississippi State University, was caught at the Columbus, Mississippi airport in 2015 and charged with attempting and conspiring to knowingly provide material support and resources to ISIS, in the form of personnel, upon her guilty plea, she fell out of the news.²⁷² There was no discussion of what happens when she finishes her 12 year sentence in federal prison. While the Islamic State may no longer exist in its current form, the very nature of terrorist groups and jihadist thought means that there will likely be no shortage of groups that she could be drawn to. Although the possibility of additional prison time could serve as a deterrent, what else would stop her from continuing on the path that put her behind bars to begin with? It is through this lens that it is important to consider deradicalization programs.

As previously described, deradicalization programs often – by necessity – are at least tangentially connected to the criminal justice system. However, they can be used as an alternative to punishment (jail or prison time) or run while a person is incarcerated. But, the larger question for policymakers is often how the public will react to significant changes like a program meant to rehabilitate terrorist. Attitudes have shifted significantly on criminal justice for issues like marijuana use and some non-violent crimes but convincing the general public that terrorists – or individuals who have shown a desire to become terrorists – are worthy candidates for societal reintegration after short periods of time with little to no guarantee on their likelihood to reoffend is an entirely different matter.

Minnesota’s Somali Population and the Nexus to Terrorism

The growth of Minnesota’s Muslim population can be traced to the outbreak of a civil war 13,000 miles away. In 1991, when a bloody war broke out in Somalia, the U.S. government was inundated with refugee requests, and Minnesota happens to be home to some of the most active Voluntary Agencies, like Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, and World Relief Minnesota, that contract with the State Department to relocate refugees.²⁷³ The first wave Somali immigrants arrived, found a welcoming city with a wide array of social programs that could help them integrate into their new home, and never left. They were joined by

²⁷²Kelly Berkell, “Off-Ramp Opportunities in Material Support Cases,” *Harvard National Security Journal*, 8, no. 1 (2017), <http://harvardnsj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/1.-Berkell.pdf>

²⁷³ Jason DeRusha, “Good Question: Why Did Somalis Locate Here?” *CBS Minnesota*, 19 January 2011, <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2011/01/19/good-question-why-did-somalis-locate-here/>.

friends, family, and a second wave of refugees.

Minnesota is home to the largest number of Somali refugees in the country, accounting for 11.9 percent of all Somali refugees that have settled in the U.S from 2010-2019.²⁷⁴ Additionally, according to data gathered by the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health, because of the thriving Somali community within the state, Minnesota also has a large number of secondary refugee resettlements among those coming from Somalia, meaning that these refugees were originally settled elsewhere in the United States and have relocated into Minnesota.²⁷⁵

According to the most recent American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. census bureau, Somali immigrants represent almost 1 percent of the population in Minnesota, with between 42,400 and 55,200 individuals of Somali heritage living in the state.²⁷⁶ For the purposes of this paper, it is important to note that a significant majority of the Somali population is young – half are under the age of 22.²⁷⁷ Additionally, many of these residents are low-income, with nearly eighty percent living below the poverty line, and are less likely to own a house or have a college degree than other ethnic groups across the state.²⁷⁸ The data also shows that this community is often underemployed, not to mention first-generation Americans or immigrants.

Perhaps more than with other communities, Somalis in Minnesota have had more difficulty in assimilating into American culture. In interviews, they've reported "not being accepted by other groups among American youth in school and being bullied, taunted, or facing racism" and Somali youth born outside the U.S. have "memories of difficult life experiences of famine, refugee camps, atrocities, and a challenging immigration process to America."²⁷⁹ Young, second generation Somalis have also pointed to "generational conflict between the traditional, conservative, and hardworking lifestyle of their parents and values of Western/U.S. youth culture"²⁸⁰ as an additional challenge in assimilating. Taken in totality, these factors

²⁷⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Refugee Health Profiles: Somalis*, August 9, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/somali/populationMovements.html>

²⁷⁵ *ibid*

²⁷⁶ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, *American Fact Finder*, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t#none>

²⁷⁷ *ibid*

²⁷⁸ Stephanie Dickrell, "What Minnesota's Somali population looks like: young, Minnesota-born and working," *Saint Cloud Times*, 17 December 2018, <https://www.sctimes.com/story/news/local/2018/12/17/st-cloud-somali-population-minnesota-statistics/2304695002/>

²⁷⁹ Kevin D. Lowry, "Responding to the Challenges of Violent Extremism/Terrorism Cases for United States Probation and Pretrial Services," *Journal for Deradicalization* 17, (Winter 2018/2019): 39.

²⁸⁰ *ibid*

point to a population that is vulnerable to the forces that recruit for terrorist groups like the Islamic State, or the Somali-based Al-Shabaab.

In 2007, an invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia caused a radicalization for Al-Shabaab, which had existed since Somalia's civil war in the 1990s,²⁸¹ and the group began recruiting from the Somali diaspora that had previously fled the country. With such a large Somali presence, Minnesota was especially hard-hit by these recruiting efforts and at least twenty-three young men traveled to join the group from 2007 through 2012.²⁸² During the height of the Islamic State between 2013 and 2017, "at least seven residents of the Minnesota Twin Cities are traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight... [and] at least ten residents attempted to travel but were unsuccessful."²⁸³ It is estimated that at least 40 members of the Somali diaspora who were living in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area "have been arrested on terrorism-related charges, have successfully traveled abroad to join an FTO, or have committed a domestic terrorist attack" since September 11, 2001.²⁸⁴

According to the George Washington University Program on Extremism, Minnesota ranks at or near the top of the lists of state with the highest frequency of those attempting to travel to join terrorist groups. They have the largest frequency of jihadist travelers per 100,000 people – 0.127 travelers – third on the list of states that have produced more than three jihadist travelers, and first for travelers per 1,000 Muslims.²⁸⁵ When examining solely charges and convictions related to those attempting to join the Islamic State, *The Washington Post* ranks Minnesota's nine convicted and four additionally charged individuals second after only New York's twelve convicted and an additional twelve individuals pending.²⁸⁶

This context is important to understand why the first deradicalization program that is directly connected to the federal government in some way, sprang out of the U.S. Federal Court in Minnesota. With the arrest of six young Somali men who were charged with planning to travel to Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State, Judge Michael J. Davis took matters into his own hands and began to carve a path into deradicalization that

²⁸¹ Claire Felter, Jonathan Masters, and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al Shabaab," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 31 January 2019. <https://www.cfr.org/background/al-shabab>

²⁸² Lauren Yuen and Sasha Aslanian, "Minnesota pipeline to al-Shabab," *MPR News*, 25 September 2013, http://minnesota.publicradio.org/projects/ongoing/somali_timeline/

²⁸³ Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes, and Bennett Clifford, "The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq," *The George Washington University Program on Extremism*, February 2018. 39.

²⁸⁴ Williams, Heather J., Nathan Chandler and Eric Robinson, "Trends in the Draw of Americans to Foreign Terrorist Organizations." RAND Corporation, 2018. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2500/RR2545/RAND_RR2545.pdf.28.

²⁸⁵ Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes, and Clifford, 19

²⁸⁶ "The Islamic State's suspected inroads into America," *The Washington Post*, 26 July 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/isis-suspects/?utm_term=.9b3cd08c0fc1

may change the way the U.S. reintegrates terrorists into society. The program, however, though limited in scope, has proven to share many of the challenges of other, larger deradicalization programs.

Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program

As the number of young defendants who had been charged with attempting to join terrorist groups or providing material support to those groups, the federal judge providing over a number of these cases saw young men who he felt were often “malleable youths who’d been ensnared by sly recruiting tactics”²⁸⁷ but were not hardened terrorists with no hope for redemption. As he searched for options and whether it was even possible to make the necessary cognitive changes to transform would-be terrorists, Judge Davis turned to Daniel Koehler – one of the best-known names in deradicalization who has worked with a number of countries to develop programs like the one Davis envisioned.

Koehler, the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization studies points out that the U.S. trails behind its European counterparts by several decades in building programs and networks to intervene and counter violent extremism,²⁸⁸ so Judge Davis’ program has the potential to serve as the model going forward. The Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program was announced in March 2016 with a mission statement that stated “untreated radicalized individuals will infect communities and continue to seek opportunities to harm others and martyr themselves.”²⁸⁹

The program is currently implemented by the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office in Minnesota,²⁹⁰ and the most extensive public information on the program comes from Kevin D. Lowry, the Chief United States Probation and Pretrial Services Officer for the U.S. District Court of Minnesota, who served as Judge Davis’ right-hand in the creation of the program.²⁹¹ The first phase of the program, which was run by Daniel Koheler, who had been hired as an expert consultant, involved “face-to-face interviews with family members and the defendants who pled guilty to providing material support to terrorism... [and] telephonic

²⁸⁷ Brendan I. Koerner, “Can You Turn A Terrorist Back Into A Citizen,” *Wired*, 24 January 2017, <https://www.wired.com/2017/01/can-you-turn-terrorist-back-into-citizen/>

²⁸⁸ Joanna Walters, “‘An incredible transformation’: how rehab, not prison, worked for a US Isis convert,” *The Guardian*, 4 January 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/04/american-isis-abdullahi-yousuf-rehabilitation>.

²⁸⁹ Lowry, Kevin, “Responding to the Challenges of Violent Extremism/Terrorism Cases for United States Probation and Pretrial Services,” *Journal for Deradicalization*, Winter 2018/2019, no. 17 (2018), <http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/download/175/130>

²⁹⁰ RTI International, “Countering Violent Extremism: The Application of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Process,” prepared for First Responders Group of the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, February 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_CVE-Application-Risk-Assessment-Tools-Criminal-Rehab-Process_2018Feb-508.pdf. 37.

²⁹¹ Lowry, 43.

and videoconferencing interviews with the prosecuting Assistant U.S. Attorneys and U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Officers... to provide a format for performing this type of evaluation.”²⁹² Koehler also trained participants in the program on a step-by-step process for deradicalization, specifically focusing on “analyzing an individual’s radicalization experience and identifying his/her underlying motivation/driving factors in order to develop a deradicalization plan was significant for program development.”²⁹³

The training program, the first of its kind in the U.S., took place from April 18 to April 22, 2016 and emphasized eleven key components that focused on the entirety of the radicalization and deradicalization process.²⁹⁴ Koehler’s training made the case that radicalization and deradicalization issues are universal, and that intervention practices could be “tailored to be utilized for a full continuum of services to include prevention and intervention programming, pretrial services, incarceration, and post-conviction supervision.”²⁹⁵

The second portion of the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program was developed in conjunction with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in the UK. Minnesota’s program used the Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG 22+), which focus on the twenty-two risk indicators that have been used in prisons across England and Wales since 2011 to help determine “prisoners’ security categorisation, bail, release, and targeted intervention programmes,” among other things.²⁹⁶ The Minnesota program built on ERG 22+ with a Developing Dialogues toolkit “to constructively [engage] offenders involved with extremist ideas, groups, causes, or ideology.”²⁹⁷

²⁹² *ibid*

²⁹³ *ibid*, 44

²⁹⁴ *ibid*, 43-44

²⁹⁵ *ibid*, 44

²⁹⁶ Rita Augestad Knudsen, “Measuring radicalization: risk assessment, conceptualisations and practice in England and Wales,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 19 August 2018, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19434472.2018.1509105?needAccess=true>, 5.

²⁹⁷ Lowry, 45.

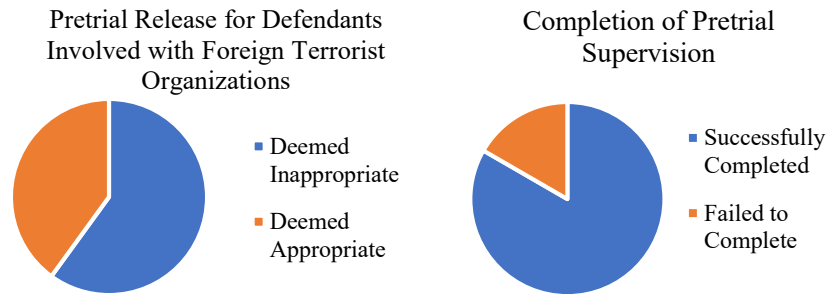


FIGURE 13

SOURCE: DATA PROVIDED BY KEVIN D. LOWRY, CHIEF UNITED STATES PROBATION AND PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICER, U.S. DISTRICT COURT OF MINNESOTA

As TDDP is run in conjunction with the criminal justice system, in many cases, it simply adds a complicating layer to processes that are carried out across the country thousands of times a day. One of the key aspects to consider is how the program deals with the issue of pretrial release. In many cases, the defendants have characteristics that would make them ideal candidates to be released, including good family support with little to no history of violent behavior; however, their radicalization is a complicating factor that may make the individual “unpredictable and both a risk of flight and danger to the community.”²⁹⁸ It is important to remember that because of constitutional guarantees *radicalization is not a crime*; rather, it can only be considered as a factor when judging if an individual’s release could be a danger to the community or might result in him or her not returning to court.

Pretrial release for TDDP participants also often hinges on cooperation with the government and honesty about their activities and associations with individuals that were involved in their radicalization. Additionally, in cases for radicalized individuals, pretrial release can serve as a way for “the defendant to be involved in positive activities that include... participation in counseling, extraordinary acceptance of responsibility to include involvement in community service projects, reestablished family relationships, and drastic lifestyle changes.”²⁹⁹ The pretrial release data can be found above in Figure 13.

Network of Influence

As previously outlined, there are often a myriad of reasons that a person has become radicalized, and

²⁹⁸ Lowry, 60.

²⁹⁹ Lowry, 64

TDDP has addressed as many of them as feasibly possible within the program. Mental health professionals can address “both preexisting mental health issues and harm inflicted by extremist radicalization tactics and involvement in terrorism” and work with participants to “rebuild a positive identity,” while substance abuse counselors can provide support if needed to break off an addiction or to help a participant understand how an extremist ideology might have influenced unhealthy behavior.³⁰⁰ The availability of mentors to address a variety of participants’ needs is also a key aspect of TDDP. Mentors can range from those providing religious support – key to replacing extremist ideology – to civic and political education support that “work with the defendant/offender on developing productive, nonviolent ways to express his/her political beliefs.”³⁰¹ TDDP also provides social services, family, and educational/vocational support.

Because of their regular contact with a participant, this network of influence also provides an invaluable source for evaluating progress and judging if an individual has failed to become deradicalized or has reengaged with their previous radical group. Social media posts often provide a window into the thinking of a TDDP participant, including a level of honesty that a defendant might not reveal in counseling sessions; as part of the training, professionals are taught how to recognize signs, symbols, and word choice that might indicate a return to radicalized thought. An offender’s support network can monitor their success in reintegration into family and society on a level that court-appointed officers may be unable to, thus they are more likely to quickly identify behavioral changes that could indicate a return to radicalization.

Success and Failure of the Program

As previously discussed, pretrial release is one of the first measures of the program’s success. While the vast majority – 83 percent – of those individuals granted pretrial release have completed that release successfully, there is one clear and concerning failure. A defendant – who was thought to be “fully cooperative and compliant” while on pretrial release – was found to have “orchestrated the radicalization process for a number of young people in a local Muslim school.”³⁰² In this case, not only did TDDP fail in deradicalizing this individual, he had the ability to radicalize others while participating in the program.

Abdullahi Yusuf, who was the catalyst for TDDP and its first participant, personifies the program in both

³⁰⁰ Lowry, 53-54.

³⁰¹ Lowry, 56

³⁰² Lowry, 64.

its successes and questions. Yusuf ostensibly graduated from the program in November 2017 when he was released from prison and allowed to return home.³⁰³ He spent a year in the program designed by Davis, Koehler, and Lowry that his “basically invented for Abdullahi as it went along,” which his lawyer credited for turning him from “a surly, closed-down kid to this really open, warm, intelligent, thoughtful, introspective young man who recognizes why he’d been attracted to Isis and why there are so many other options for him.”³⁰⁴ Currently, he is still strictly monitored by probation officers and “has taken steps towards reintegration.”³⁰⁵ However, only time will tell if his deradicalization is true or if he has simply disengaged.

In total, the program currently supervises twenty-five individuals who have been convicted of terrorism or terrorism-related charges; “with 13 being jihadist and 12 white supremacists.”³⁰⁶ Lowry is clear that TDDP “will be measured with the goals and protocols used to measure success for all Probation and Pretrial Services cases” but will also be tailored specifically with indicators of extremist thought and behavior that have been identified through Koheler and the HMPPS training.³⁰⁷ Chief U.S. District Court Judge John Tunheim placed the bar for the success of the program even high than simple deradicalization; rather, he said that he would judge success as radicalized individuals reintegrated into society as productive citizens.³⁰⁸

Like with the UK’s DDP program, and to a lesser extent Channel, it looks to be too early in the process to truly judge the success or failure of the program. The period of supervision for many of these individuals – often ranging from 20 years to life³⁰⁹ – is also such that success cannot easily be judged less than three years into the program. While there has been at least one significant failure, other participants in the program appear to have been deradicalized to a point that they are allowed to reintegrate into society. Ultimately, like the DDP, there is too little available data on all of the individuals participating in Minnesota’s Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program to paint a complete picture of the

³⁰³ Walters

³⁰⁴ *ibid*

³⁰⁵ Katerina Papatheodorou, “Preventing, Not Just Countering, Violent Extremism,” *Lawfare*, 29 April 2018, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/preventing-not-just-countering-violent-extremism>.

³⁰⁶ Ivy Kaplan, “An inside look at the first domestic deradicalization program,” *The Defense Post*, 12 February 2019, <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/02/12/us-minnesota-deradicalization-program-inside-look/>

³⁰⁷ Lowry, 79.

³⁰⁸ Kaplan

³⁰⁹ Lowry, 79.

program or to judge it a success.

Conclusion

There is no indication that, taken by themselves, either the UK program or the U.S. program has been any more successful than the other. However, because the UK program is supported – and mandated – by the central government, it has been instituted country-wide and able to impact the entire at-risk population. No matter how successful the program in Minnesota is, by its very nature, it will only be open to participants that flow through the U.S. District Court and Probation/Pretrial Services in Minnesota. While there is no question that Minnesota is home to one of the most at-risk populations in the country, which has already shown a willingness to travel to join terrorist groups, there are other hotspot populations that could benefit from a similar program. With the U.S. government forgoing any leadership in this arena, there is likely to be little progress made in this area before the next terrorist group pops up that recruits from American citizens or residents.

The lack of transparency with both the *Prevent* programs and the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program also make it challenging to assess whether either can be judged a success. Recognizing that there are privacy concerns with releasing data on non-compulsory programs that might negatively impact participation rates, the UK's review of *Prevent* this year should also address how data could be given to the public or academia to allow for a more comprehensive study of the effectiveness of the program. Similarly, TDDP should create more definitive metrics to determine success rates.

Minnesota's Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program (TDDP) and *Prevent's* Distance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) are the mostly obviously similar, specifically related to the populations that they are pulling from and the size of the original pilot programs. As the British government works to expand DDP it can serve as a blueprint for how TDDP could be expanded across the United States should the Justice Department be so inclined. As both countries deal with citizens seeking to return from their times fighting with ISIS or similar groups, the need to increase the scale of both programs will also increase. Although TDDP has modeled some of its program on aspects of British systems, there is more that they may want to adopt.

Ultimately, as the scholarship into deradicalization would indicate, it seems too soon to fully evaluate the

success or failure of these programs. They are in relatively infantile stages, especially compared to other aspects of counterterrorism, and should not be judged on their most public failings. In the coming years, as more data becomes available and the progression of participants in the program can be looked at more comprehensively, it will be time to reevaluate.

Conclusion

Executive Summary

This paper has walked through three sets of case studies on deradicalization, disengagement, and counter-radicalization efforts in particularly countries, with an emphasis on how the programs are structured; what populations they focus on; and the successes and failures of the programs with an eye toward identifying not only commonalities amongst the programs but aspects that have generated success that could be replicated in other countries.

The deradicalization programs in Norway and Sweden set themselves apart from the other case studies for several different reasons. Obviously, the type of extremism that they attempt to address – neo-Nazi white supremacy – is considerably different than the Islamic extremism looked at in the other examples.

Additionally, these countries, as “exit” programs, emphasize the disengagement of individuals from extremism – perhaps even setting aside outright discussions of ideology and deradicalization – more than the programs discussed in other countries. The comparison of the programs in Norway and Sweden also showed that having a younger population involved in extremism, like in the case of Norway, allows the program to rely on parents and other “adults” to demonstrate that there is life separate from extremism where the needs that drove this individual into neo-Nazi groups can be met. This diverged from Sweden’s program, which required extremist individuals to reach out to the program proactively to receive help, rather than the program identifying these individuals, at least partially because the radicalized population was older and had more social opportunities within the group, so the program wanted to ensure that anyone who was participating was serious about leaving the ideology.

The programs shared a view of holistically addressing the needs of those leaving extremism, albeit in different ways because of different needs predicated on age. However, both programs incorporated educational, financial, and counseling services into the core components of the program. By addressing all of these aspects, the programs provided support for their clients by seeking to minimize the risk factors that might have them returning to the extremist ideology.

Ultimately, the data that is available indicates that both programs had overall high rates of success. Norway was able to drastically reduce police contacts with individuals involved in far-right groups, an indication

that the groups themselves had decreased in size. The statistics for Sweden's program, especially those for the three years where there is verifiable data, are equally impressive – with a 94 percent success rate for participating individuals. However, that is not to say that there aren't failures within the programs.

Norway's largest right-wing extremist attack occurred after the government had judged the program to be so successful as to have eradicated the program, where Sweden's program had participants both returning to their former extremist groups or joining others. However, the most problematic aspect of both programs is the lack of sufficient data to verify the claims of success. Norway's program lasted only a handful of years and there has been little – if any – follow up for participants in intervening years. Sweden's program, though it exists in some regard today, has not had truly audited data since its first three years. While this is partially due to the country's data protections that restrict the collection of personal information by NGO's, it is a significant obstacle to evaluating the program.

Using Morocco and Saudi Arabia as examples, this paper examines into how Muslim-majority countries are tackling their citizens' extremism, which causes terrorist attacks in their own countries, as well as abroad. Morocco and Saudi Arabia showcase how the government's use of different interpretations of Islam can have a significant impact on how their deradicalization programs are structured, but also on the country's credibility to deal with the extremism issue. Morocco's long track record of advancing a moderate form of Islam allowed the government to pour additional resources into programs that used this interpretation to counter-radicalize populations that were at risk of being drawn into extremist ideologies. Morocco used a multi-pronged approach to counter-radicalization including training imams, monitoring what sort of religious education is occurring across the country, and using media outlets like television and radio stations to both spread a moderate message and answer religious questions. This last focus on religious education is especially critical because previous research as indicated that a substantial number of individuals who join extremist groups are classified as those that have poor religious education.

While Saudi Arabia also incorporates counter-radicalization into their program, they are faced with issues of credibility tracing back to the Wahhabi interpretation that is favored by the Saudi government. For years, the Saudis spent millions of dollars spreading their strict, conservative interpretation of Islam across the globe; however, this interpretation of Islam is also the version favored by terrorist groups including al Qaeda. Saudi-backed groups themselves have long been accused of spreading extremism, including from

the floor of mosques that were built with the funding and blessing of the Saudi government. Therefore, the counter-intuitive and inherently opposing nature of both spreading an interpretation of Islam favored by extremists and simultaneously trying to counter-radicalize and deradicalize individuals presents a serious problem for the Saudi government.

Both the specific deradicalization aspects of the programs in Morocco and Saudi Arabia are geared toward prisoners, although they have notable and important differences. Morocco's program is smaller and more targeted to individuals that have previously expressed that they were reconsidering participation in extremist groups and were open to change, while Saudi's program is much more expansive. The key difference, however, is the lack of "aftercare" or support when a deradicalized individual leaves prison. So far, there is no indication that Morocco has created any such social safety net to assist participants with counseling or reintegration back into society. Clearly, this leaves them vulnerable to being drawn back into extremism. In much the same way that Norway and Sweden's Exit programs were predicated on this type of support, Saudi's program attempts to decrease recidivism by devoting significant resources to this type of support.

It should be expected, then, that Saudi would have lower rates of individuals returning to terrorism, but Morocco's use of already-questioning extremists as the basis of their prison deradicalization process likely helps their success rates. Unfortunately, detailed data on participants and rates of recidivism in both programs are severely lacking. Saudi Arabia's self-reported statistics have been amended several times as high-profile individuals returning to extremism have come to light – there reported 100 percent success rate is now (generously) considered to be 80-90 percent but may be much lower. As accurate data is critical towards evaluating programs, final determinations on both of these programs remain nearly impossible.

In the case of deradicalization programs in the United Kingdom and the United States, the most noticeable and important difference is how the program is structured in regards to the central government. The UK's CVE program, *Prevent*, reserves much of the governing and designing power for the deradicalization program for the Home Office. While individual communities and municipalities have councils that address the specific needs of individuals, overall the program is dictated from the top down. The U.S. program, such that it exists, is relegated to one federal court in the state of Minnesota that has designed its own program with no input from the federal government. The U.S. deradicalization program is completely

disengaged from any larger program, which is one of the factors that has made it nearly impossible to replicate the program in other locales. However, the design of the U.S. program bears a striking resemblance to the functionality of the program in the UK, as officials in the U.S. who designed the program leaned heavily on some of the lessons learned from the British system.

Additionally, the population targets for both the U.S. and UK programs bear some striking resemblances – perhaps one of the reasons that the U.S. program was designed to mimic much of the one in the UK.

Although, generally, the Muslim population in the U.S. is much more integrated into society at large, as well as being comparatively educated and having similar unemployment rates, the Muslim population in Minnesota that surrounds the deradicalization program has much more in common with the UK population. Minnesota's Somali population, which accounts for the vast majority of the community's Muslim population, is comparatively less educated, with higher rates of unemployment, similar to the UK population. Additionally, both the UK and Minnesota Somali population are less well-integrated, and thus are easier targets for extremist groups.

Ultimately, the programs that are most successful within the six cases studies examined, all seek to address – in a holistic manner – the issues that drive individuals to seek out extremism. Though this can take many forms, from parental support and family counseling to job training and financial opportunities, these programs help members of extremist groups deradicalize and disengage more completely, with less of a chance that they will return to extremist groups because they lack support. Additionally, education is a key component in all of these programs, though that education may look different program to program. In some cases, religious education is the most important factor in helping individuals deradicalize, while in others education can be used to display potential growth and success opportunities outside of the extremist group.

Consistently, in all of the programs that were examined in this paper, a lack of transparent data has been a significant barrier to judging the effectiveness of the program. This lack of data comes from a variety of factors, including a desire to protect the privacy of participants, but is nonetheless harmful in adjudicating the efficacy of these programs. In additional hindrance has been the timeframes that are available to judge the success or failure of the programs, as many of these programs have been in place for less than a decade. As previously discussed, the only verifiable way to judge whether someone has been successfully deradicalized is for them to remain disengaged from their extremist group. Someone who is thought to be a

successful deradicalization today may be the opposite tomorrow, a year from now, or ten years in the future. Therefore, to truly judge these programs, it is necessary to monitor them over an extended period of time.

Further Research

As this field is so new – relative to many other aspects of social science and terrorism research – there is a vast realm of possibilities into what should be covered in future research. The most obvious avenue is a reconsideration of these programs, particularly their successes and failures. Although the two programs covered in the first chapter are either no longer in existence (Norway) or constituted differently (Sweden), follow up research into whether individuals who successfully deradicalized and disengaged stayed that way. As long-term deradicalization is the ultimate goal, knowing if these Exit programs facilitate that would be useful for planning future programs that address neo-Nazi extremist groups. As, globally, far-right ideologies are making comebacks – especially in the U.S. and Europe, having updated data could be critical to deal with future problems.

Similarly, additional looks at the UK deradicalization programs, using the updated data that results from that country's audit of its deradicalization programs could be extremely helpful. As the UK seems an influx of extremists returning from fighting with the Islamic State, it would be interesting to see if the compulsory portions of that program have an impact in the long term. Additionally, as a portion of the U.S. program borrows from the British model, updated data may necessitate in altering some segments to make it more effective.

It may also be interesting to expand upon how different interpretations of Islam impact a country's deradicalization program and if there are certain interpretations whose followers have higher success rates in deradicalizes. Building on the idea that Saudi Wahhabism actually hurts the country's credibility in deradicalization programs, a look at specific countries where the Saudis have been instrumental in encouraging the growth of strict interpretations of Islam might also provide needed insights into this field of study.

Ultimately, there are many different routes that could be taken in researching deradicalization but until countries make a concerted effort to provide increased transparency into the data on these programs, many

insights are likely to remain out of reach. Without this data, it is nearly impossible to may concrete judgements into whether countries should expand deradicalization efforts or if the return on investment is not worthy.

Designing A Universal Program

It is clear that each program explored in this thesis was clearly designed to address the issues within their specific population sets. However, there are clearly commonalities amongst the programs that could serve as the basis for a basic deradicalization or disengagement program template that could then be tailored, as needed, by governments or NGOs across the globe. Below, such a program is outlined. While it leaves many of the details vague, as these are the specific components that would best be designed by on-the-ground experts so they could be targeted for a specific area or ideology, it takes the best practices learned from this paper.

As explored extensively, programs that provided comprehensive support for deradicalization and disengagement enjoyed the most success. These programs addressed all of the root causes that would lead an individual to join an extremist group, like lack of education or a job and strained or nonexistent familial connections or friendships. Therefore, the most important aspect of this template program would be its holistic design, which would also impact important factors like who runs the program.

Determining who will implement these programs is one of the first issues. While the programs explored in this paper were most commonly run by governmental agencies, NGOs often played an important role or even took the lead, like in the case of Norway. There are obvious pitfalls for each – governments often don't have the right expertise or the ability to act quickly or change programmatic aspects with an immediacy that may be needed, while NGOs in privacy-friendly countries are often restricted from maintaining the data and records that are necessary to judge successes and failures, as well as often being hamstrung by funding limitations. Therefore, perhaps it makes the most sense to establish a partnership of the two, with the government providing a devoted funding stream – for several years at a time to provide certainty – and the NGO providing the services.

While one NGO may be able to adequately support such a program, it is likely that establishing a consortium would make more sense to support our holistic program. One NGO, perhaps an organization

devoted to building job skills, would provide vocational training for individuals reintegrating into society through employment, another would take the lead in providing individual and family counseling. Where necessary, a religious organization could support religious education. While some extremism obviously has a religious component where this specific NGO would be critical to include, white supremacist extremism – as previously outlined – does not have much of a religious component. In this case, offering religious teachings, perhaps of a variety of faiths, could be useful if a participant seems amenable but would not be one of the core aspects of such a program.

In addition to providing funding, the inclusion of government entities could allow for the collection of more extensive data on individual participants that NGOs are prohibited from obtaining in certain European countries. This data is vital in determining the success of the program and allowing for follow-up on participants in the intervening years to determine if they remained deradicalized and disengaged from their former extremism, painting a clearer picture of where the program should be adjusted if there are significant failures.

As part of this, mandating the release of programmatic data on a consistent basis should also be viewed as a requirement. This data can serve multiple purposes. It allows for scholarly reviews of the program and can be used to identify areas where the program is not as successful as it could or should be. Additionally, publicly releasing data builds confidence in the program, both with the general public and targeted populations that the programs are geared toward. The general public is less likely to call for cutting off government funding for programs if they are able to see results and have a better understanding of how a program is working; after all, sunlight is the best disinfectant. Individuals who are involved in extremism that may be interested in leaving, or family and friends of these individuals that may be seeking help in removing them from this ideology also seem more likely to reach out to a program that is transparent, rather than hidden in the shadows. This transparency can help build trust in targeted communities that would feel comfortable in turning to these programs for assistance.

Trust is clearly a key part of these programs, especially in ones that are voluntary and where participation is not mandated by law enforcement or other entities. When designing a global program, it is clearly important to determine *who* will be served by these programs and *how* they will come to be in them. While mandatory programs clearly serve an important purpose, deradicalization efforts for individuals that aren't

yet amenable to the idea that their belief system is faulty seem much less likely to be successful. Mandatory programs may convince individuals to disengage by showing that there are negative consequences – like prison – for continued participation, this author remains unconvinced that complete deradicalization is likely in these cases. It seems more likely that a mandatory program could build resentment among participants that convince them of anything.

Therefore, a global template program should first focus on voluntary participation, with a particular focus on individuals that reach out directly or indirectly to the program for assistance. While referrals may come from parents, friends, teachers, or counselors, programs should be designed with an eye toward preventing referrals based on prejudicial or racial beliefs. While the UK program is clearly not perfect, referrals going to a council before a person is enrolled in the program, provides an interesting backstop to prevent this. A similar component will be necessary for a global template program. This is also where the involvement of multiple NGOs will be helpful. As professionals, they will be able to evaluate referrals without bias to determine if someone could benefit from the deradicalization program.

Voluntary programs could also clearly benefit from the participation of former extremists. Using these individuals in a similar manner to the “coaches” in the Swedish program can clearly provide benefits. They give legitimacy to the program and allow for a conduit through which individuals interested in leaving extremism feel comfortable reaching out. These former extremists also provide a perspective that is unable to be replicated through other means. While NGOs are able to support and identify individuals, they aren’t able to truly relate to why a person joins an extremist group. Many of the problems that cropped up with these former extremists in Sweden could be rather easily eliminated. The most obvious safeguard is preventing them from taking a lead in the governing of programmatic funds. Additionally, the NGOs and government partners could be tasked with ensuring that the former extremists receive the same support as other participants, which would allow for leaders to determine if a former extremist is potentially backsliding and allow them to aid him or to dismiss him from participating in the program altogether.

A program such as the one described above lays out some clear markers for creating a deradicalization and disengagement program that could be tailored and implemented across the globe, regardless of the ideology involved in the extremism. By pulling together the aspects of the six programs examined in this paper that worked best and orienting the template program to address the problematic aspects of them, governments

and NGOs would have a leg up in the design of their program.

Looking Forward

Deradicalization programs are likely to be part of Countering Violent Extremism strategies for many years to come, especially if current data trends on their success bear out. As currently constituted, they provide one of the few opportunities for countries to address their extremism problem after individuals have already been radicalized. However, it seems possible, especially in Western countries, that governments may encourage NGOs to become more involved and even take the lead in some of these programs, as they may provide increased credibility in affected communities that the government simply does not enjoy. NGO involvement could certainly be a positive step in many cases, but programs like Exit Sweden do raise some potential challenges.

Ideally, countries that have deradicalization programs will undertake audits of them – much like is currently underway in Britain – which will provide much needed data on how the programs are run and the populations they serve. Continuing to operate without this data leaves deradicalization programs open to critics who argue that they are not an effective use of time and money. Data is also desperately needed to verify that the portions of deradicalization programs that are currently believed to be the most effective, like providing holistic care for individuals during their transition out of extremism, continue to be effective the farther removed someone is from deradicalization.

It is this author's hope that the U.S. will see how successful deradicalization programs have been in other countries – especially where the populations mirror locales within the United States – and invest seriously in creating an infrastructure to encourage more deradicalization programs in the United States. The program in Minnesota has thus far proven to be successful, but by its nature, can only reach a miniscule fraction of the population. With the growing violence by radical right-wing ideologies, and the continued threat from Islamic extremist groups, the need for effective deradicalization programs is likely to grow, not wane.

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CURRICULUM VITA

EDUCATION

- **University of Florida, Gainesville, FL** **August 2006 to August 2009**
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Minor in History.

Languages: Proficient: Arabic

Fluent: French

- National and State Winner for Le Grand Concours (National French Contest),
Superior Rating from the Foreign Language Association of Georgia

Fluent: Latin

- Summa cum Laude for National Latin Exam, Spoken Latin Champion (JCL),
Latin Student of the Year, Superior Rating from the Foreign Language Association of Georgia

WORK HISTORY

- **PRIME POLICY GROUP, WASHINGTON, D.C.** **October 2018 – Present**
Director
 - Helps lead the firm's trade practice
 - Coordinates all clients lobbying and strategic outreach activities around trade
 - Advises clients on issues including 232 and 301 tariff action, USMCA, CFIUS, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, and all other related issues
 - Prepares client comment submissions for pending regulatory action related to trade
 - Provides clients timely updates on matters critical to their business interests, specifically authoring the firm's *Tracking Tariffs and Trade* publication and the semi-regular *Tax Tuesday*
 - Authors large white papers for clients on policy matters, as well as the potential implications of elections for clients
- **PRIME POLICY GROUP, WASHINGTON, D.C.** **January 2015 – October 2018**
Director of Research
 - Supervises and coordinates Prime's Research Staff
 - Oversaw the creation of the firm's new website and its daily content updates
 - Provides clients timely communication on matters critical to their business interests, including weekly tax updates, trade agreement progress, regulation changes, government contracting opportunities, and media clippings
 - Researches, drafts, and edits written materials, including position papers and legislative language for meetings with Congressional and Administration officials
 - Assists the firm's marketing and client development efforts, including printed and audio-visual materials
 - Manages and co-authors large white papers for clients on policy matters, as well as the potential implications of elections for clients
- **PRIME POLICY GROUP, WASHINGTON, D.C.**
Associate **July 2013 – January 2015**
Client Executive **June 2012 – July 2013**
Client Staff Assistant **May 2011 – June 2012**
Full-Time Intern **October 2010 – May 2011**
 - Balanced and managed multiple time sensitive projects simultaneously

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- Created and Maintained the Prime Policy Group Tax Hub
- Supported client leaders in forecasting and predicting the possibilities of legislative success and timing
- Helped to stand-up and monitor the day-to-day activities of a 501(c)(3) organization
- Monitored and provided read-outs on hearings of interest to clients
- Organized, scheduled, and managed client events of various sizes, including Capitol Hill Days
- Assisted with the execution of firm's post-election reports

• **COALBLUE PROJECT, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

July 2014

– 2016

Administrator

- Schedule and deadline management
- Keep long-term events calendar (national conferences, registration deadlines, etc.)
- Correspondence/Inquiry maintenance
- Liaison with select vendors
- Maintain contact information on funders, prospective funders, Democratic supporters, etc.
- Record and deposit incoming contributions; notify accountant of deposits; and record incoming invoices to accountant for payment

• **OFFICE OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Full-Time Intern

January 2008 – May

2008

- Answered telephones, relating constituents' cares and concerns to proper staff members
- Assisted scheduler by organizing Senator's meetings and appointments while maintaining comprehensive meeting log for all Senate staff members
- Attended briefings and hearings on subjects such as education and healthcare issues; wrote memos for relevant staffers
- Handled constituent correspondence, specifically health care and judiciary committee issues such as FISA, immigration, mental health funding, and Medicare, during staff transition
- Proficiency in Intranet Quorum (IQ)

• **OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ATHENS, GEORGIA**

Intern

August 2005 – May 2008

- Oversaw and facilitated communication between international student organizations and the University of Georgia
- Organized, marketed, and managed the International Life Street Fair to showcase culture from over thirty countries and ethnic groups
- Facilitated individual Coffee Hour presentations for a variety of international student groups